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Complexities of Polish migrant's citizenship attributions in the context of Brexit and the Scottish Independence Referendums

Pietka-Nykaza, Emilia; McGhee, Derek

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Abstract:

This article focuses on the experiences of Scotland's largest foreign-born minority group, namely Poles, in the run-up to the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014 and subsequently the UK's EU Referendum. Through exploring Polish migrant residents initial responses and experiences with regard to both referendums, this article (1) outlines perspectives on blurred and contested boundaries and formations of citizenships and (2) the implications of complex and changing relations between citizenship attributions (e.g. political participation, legal status of citizenship and sense of belonging) on the process of citizenship formation. This article therefore offers a greater understanding of the transformation of traditional state-centric concepts of citizenship rights into the shifting borders and character of citizenship formation during the times of political uncertainties.

Introduction:

In defining citizenship scholars tend to draw attention to three interrelated attributes of citizenship: legal status and rights, political participation and sense of belonging (Bloemraad et al. 2008). The first attribution refers to legal status that grants a range of civil, political and social rights to its holder (Marshall [1950] 1992). It refers to the formal capacities and immunities connected with such status, but also rules and regulation of accessing it. The second attribution - political participation, denotes active participation in the governance of the state in which individual holds status. The third attribution, sense of belonging, refers to the behavioural aspects of individuals acting and conceiving of themselves as members of a collective (Joppke, 2007). This paper explores the complex, contested and changing relations between citizenship attributes among Polish migrant residents in Scotland at the time of the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014 and the UK's Referendum on European Union membership in 2016.

Scotland in this period provides a unique context for examining the tensions, changing relations and perceived inconsistencies between citizenship attributions including citizenship rights, forms of participation and sense of belonging among EU migrant residents (including Poles). This paper will argue that through examining our participants' actions, justifications, experiences and associated emotions related to their contradictory experiences of enfranchisement and disenfranchisement in the state and sub-state (regional) referendums, we can observe the shifting borders and character of citizenship. The timing of our research, the Independence Referendum in 2014 and the UK's Referendum on European Union membership in 2016 offers what Clarke *et al* refers to as a temporally specific context for the analysis of citizenship (2014: 10). The situation in question

1

provides a context for the observation of the recasting of citizenship constellations in the context of complex social and political transformations and uncertainties. By examining our participants' initial responses, intentions and experiences with regard to both referendums, this article (1) explores Polish migrant residents' perspectives on blurred and contested boundaries and formations of their citizenships and (2) the implications of complex and changing relations between their citizenship attributions on their sense of belonging. This article offers a greater understanding of the transformation of traditional state-centric concepts of citizenship rights into broader and more overlapping circles of membership affiliations. By so doing, it exposes for analysis what Balibar refers to as 'the open and unfinished character' of citizenship (2004: xi) which Clarke et al refer to as a practices and a processes, rather than as a stable state (Clarke et al. 2014).

The article focuses on the largest minority group in Scotland, namely Polish migrant. The data discussed in this paper include 24 individual in-depth interviews with Polish adults, (12 in Glasgow and 12 in Edinburgh) conducted between May and June 2014 in the run-up to the Independence Referendum on 18th September 2014. Subsequent to this, in May-June 2016 (in the run-up to and just after the British Referendum on EU membership), further 12 follow-up interviews were conducted with a selection of those participants in Glasgow and Edinburgh who indicated that they took part in state and sub-state (regional) elections. This study applies innovative and more longititual perspective that it engages with migrants in the context of the Scottish independence referendum and then subsequently reengages with many of them following the Brexit vote. A thematic analysis of the interview transcript was undertaken using a technique advocated by Boyatzis (1998). From the beginning, pseudonyms were used for each participant. Initially, an overview thematic grid was produced to identify and collate migrants' views on the topics discussed. Relevant sections of the transcripts were assigned appropriate thematic codes and refined sub-categories emerged.

Polish migrant's presence in Scotland

The accession of the eight new member states (A8 – Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary) to the European Union on 1 May 2004 resulted in significant inward migration to the UK, including Scotland. As a result of this high level of incoming migration from Poland, the recent 2011 census data showed that the Polish community appears to be one of the fastest growing migrant populations in the UK. In Scotland, it rose from 2,505 in 2001 to 55,231 in 2011, reaching an estimated 86,000 in 2015 in Scotland (ONS, 2016). Despite the economic recession in the 2008, large numbers of Eastern European migrants have continued to enter the UK (McCollum, 2013).

While Poles constitute the largest non-UK migrants group in Scotland, the majority of this population (85% of Poles), came to Scotland between 2004 and 2007 (Ross,2007). The drivers for Polish migration to Scoland are diverse with key motives being around employment and partner/ family (Pietka-

Nykaza 2018). Despite migration from Poland being described as open-ended and fluid (Engbersen and Snel, 2011), the census data in 2011 is evidence that significant number of Poles have stayed in Scotland. That being said, the result of the UK's European Referendum in June 2016 and the subsequent loss of the EU citizenship, EU funding and some EU social rights and protections will affect EU nationals including Poles in Scotland, more than others (Hepburn, 2020). Thus, the restrictions to rights and entitlements of EU nationals will inevitably have an impact on Polish migrants' migration and settlement patterns and practices.

The emergent body of research that considers Brexit and its implications for EU nationals in the UK has provided critical commentary on how Brexit intensified existing and longer-standing structural and institutional discrimination and everyday racism (Rzepnikowska, 2018; Virdee and McGeever, 2017) and contributed to growing vulnerabilities and welfare bordering practices (Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2018). The impact of Brexit among EU nationals with regards to the complexity of migrant attachment to place (Botterill and Hancock, 2019), sense and dynamics of belonging and future plans in the UK have been further explored (Ranta and Nancheva, 2019). What becomes evident is that Brexit is perceived by many EU migrants as a political event that destabilised their sense of belonging and feelings of security (Lulle, Moroşanu, and King 2018; Tyrrell et al. 2018). Others however, tend to articulate that Brexit is only a part of longer continuum of the structural and institutional discrimination of EU migrants evidenced throughout the longer-standings restriction of their citizenship rights (McGhee and Pietka-Nykaza, 2016) and access to labour markets and social protection (Lafleur and Mescol, 2018). This article offers new insights to citizenship constellations by providing greater understandings of complex, blurred and changing relations between citizenship attributions including political participation, legal citizenship and sense of belonging. By so doing, it illustrates how experiences, formation and erosion of citizenship rights of EU nationals (including Poles) in the context of Brexit had further implications on their sense of belonging to wider political communit(ies).

Migration and Citizenship nexus: Unfinished character of Citizenship

Citizenship, or its lack, is often felt and experienced most acutely by those who are crossing borders. Mobility and migration processes raise the questions of migrants relations to their country of residence and the country they left behind. By crossing territorial borders, migrants create populations of foreign residents inside, and expatriate citizens outside the state territory. These processes however contribute to complex, fluid or overlapping constellations of their memberships in their country of residence and the country they left behind. As a result, the migrants often do not share the same citizenship rights which can result in them experiencing precarious and in-between categories of denizenship (Hammar, 1990). However, such migrants try to struggle for access to full citizenship rights and what they can end up with is the often painful experience of the 'imperfection' of citizenship (Clark et al 2014). According to Balibar, citizenship is always '*imparfaite*' (unfinished)

and as an object of social and political desire that is always '*under construction*' (Balibar, 2001, cited in Clarke et al., 2014:4). Indeed, as well as seeing citizenship in terms of questions of process and access, citizenship(s) is also fraught with contradictions. Following Balibar's understanding of citizenship, this paper will explore ambiguities and conflicts between citizenship attributions, namely legal status and rights, political participation and sense of belonging among Polish migrant residents in Scotland, in the context of the Scottish Independence Referendum and the UK's EU Referendum. Polish migrants' understandings and experiences in Scotland will be presented as a mismatch between different citizenship attributes will serve as a means of exploring tensions between different citizenship attributions that make up citizenship. As such, this article will give a voice, through the qualitative research, to migrants themselves on how the unfinished character of citizenships, that is, the imperfect (Balibar 2001: 211), incomplete and incompletable (Balibar 2004: 182) is experienced in the context of the political change.

Opportunities for political participation

The EU citizenship provides political participation rights for citizens of the European Union based on their residence and their common status as citizens of the Union (Day and Shaw, 2002: 183). As a result, EU citizens defined as the nationals of the Member States (Article 17 EC) have rights to vote in and stand in local elections and European Parliamentary elections when resident in a member state other than the one in which they hold citizenship (Day and Shaw, 2002). In addition, EU resident migrants in the UK also have electoral rights in the devolved political institutions in 'region nations' of Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland (Shaw, 2007: 275). Following from that, EU citizens are able to vote in regionally based referendums as enshrined in the Local Government Elections Regulations 1995. These electoral rights are possible because the regional elections and referenda are sub-state and as such are governed within a framework analogous to local elections for the purpose of the franchise and so the right to vote flows naturally from that conclusion (Shaw, 2007: 275).

The political rights of EU citizens could be perceived as 'alien suffrage' (Day and Shaw, 2002: 184) that aimed to strengthen EU nationals' civic inclusion in their country of residence. Indeed, enfranchisement in the Scottish Independence Referendum has given Polish residents in Scotland a taste of a different type of participation and had further implication on their civic integration and sense of belonging, for example

> *I also have to say that the referendum forced me to seek information and ask questions. The more I know, the more attached I feel to this country, the bigger my knowledge about this country, the more familiar and homelike it becomes.*
> Dawid, Edinburgh

Having the right to cast his vote in the Independence Referendum had the effect of strengthening Dawid's sense of feeling attached to Scotland and also

a sense of belonging in Scotland. It is through Dawid's active participation and engagement that we can observe how he articulates (and thus constitutes) the relation between having a right to vote and his attachment to his country of residence. For some of participants enfranchisement in the Independence Referendum was perceived as a 'gift' and as recognition of migrants' presence and contribution to the host country. Such experience was articulated by Marta:

> I think it was a very valid and positive gesture, a token of trust on the part of the government [Scottish Government]. because no matter how you look at it, the immigrants who come here not only join the army of labourers but also settle down here and contribute to the economy, plan their lives here and shape the culture of the country, and so I think they should totally have the right to vote as well
> Marta, Glasgow

According to Marta, the enhanced political rights were 'gifted' to EU migrants by a pro-migration Scottish Government (rather than being voting rights instituted by the Maastricht Treaty 1993 and the Local Government Election Regulations 1995). Marta's perception also resonates with perception of Scotland being more 'welcoming' to migrants and distinctive narratives around migration in Scotland (McCollum et al., 2014). However, having had different opportunities for political participation our participants have begun to make a subjective claim to extend their voting rights to all elections (Pietka-Nykaza and McGhee 2016). Their inclusion in the Independence Referendum in September 2014 could however be perceived as temporary enhancement to their political rights. This is because EU migrant residents (including Poles) were subsequently disenfranchised in the UK's referendum on EU membership in June 2016 with the UK Government decising to use the Westminister electoral Roll. Such change in Polish migrants political rights could also illustrate changing boundaries of who is 'deserving' and 'undeserving' of the privilege of having rights awarded to the members of the political community (Yuval-Davis et al., 2018). Our participants' initial response to being disenfranchised in the EU referendum and also the outcome of the UK's EU Referendum, was met with the feelings of sadness, despair, confusion, anger and disappointment. Basia described her experiences as follow:

> There is so much anxiety about what happened… When we found out about the results… I really don't know anybody who's not affected by it. It was terrifying… You'd go out on the street and somehow feel different… But why feel different…? It was like waking up in a completely different reality and that was shocking… Before it actually happened, it went on and on for a long time, and then there was a boom!
> Basia, Glasgow

The uncertainties and anxiety in relation to the UK leaving the EU dominate Basia's perspectives on the UK's Eu Referendum. These experiences of

anxiety were enhanced by the growing hostity towards EU migrants in public and media discourses. Such experiences were articulated by Marta:

> *I must say that I have succumbed to the general atmosphere of psychosis; you can't help but get affected by it if everyone around you is bombarding you with questions and you're exposed to the media…*
> Marta, Glasgow

The feeling of anxiety, according to Marta is escalated by the growing evidence of experiences of racism among young Eastern Europeans that are further discussed by Sime and Clark in this edition. While Eastern European migrants were initially seen as 'hard working' migrants and thus a welcome addition to the workforce, such view have been replaced since the economic crisis in 2008 by stereotypical accusations, in public and political discourse that EU nationals are not only 'stealing' jobs from British people, but are also exploit the social security system (Moreh et al. 2018). The vulnerable position of migrants not being able to challenge the negative discourses around migration in pre-Brexit debates, as articulated by Marta, was further complicated by EU migrant residents disfranchisement from the EU referendum. Indeed, disfranchisement in the UK's EU Referendum had further implications on our participants' civic engagement. Our participants felt that they had been forced to change their attitudes and behaviors from being active participant in the Scottish Independence Referendum to becoming passive observes of the Brexit debate. However, the attitude of being a passive observers could also be a form of defence mechanism as described by Radek:

> *No, I've not been reading anything about it. I think it's just sick, really. … All these arguments are truly sick and that's why I don't follow this debate. I don't bother*
> Radek, Edinburgh

In addition to applying defense mechanism with regards to not engaging with public debates, disfranchisement in the UK's Referendum on EU membership had further impacts on our participants expressing their lack of trust towards the UK Government:

> *Decision to exclude EU residents from voting was tactical: This was a political attack on us [EU citizens] and that was the whole point*
> Jolanta, Edinburgh

From Jolanta's narrative, not having voting rights in the EU referendum was related to the UK's Government anti-immigration ethos (in contrast to Scotland's pro-migration ethos) and hostile environment towards migrants. It is in the shift between being enfranchised in the Scottish Independence Referendum to then being disenfranchised in the subsequent UK's vote on EU membership that we can observe the tension experienced by EU migrants in Scotland between the different formations and compositions of the memberships of a political community. Our participants have experienced ambivalence and the lack of consistency with regards to boundaries of their

citizenship rights, in particular their eligibility as political participations. These experiences show the mismatch between political rights and formal citizenship status where those EU migrants residents, such as Poles in Scotland, who participated in the Scottish Independence Referendum were excluded from casting their votes in subsequent referendum on the UK's EU Membership. This however could be seen to be an example of what Bauböck (1994) describes as 'citizenship boundaries' becoming even more blurred and inconsistent. The shift from inclusion in the political community to exclusion from political community has had further implications on our participants level of trust in the UK Government, sense of belonging in the UK and this has had knock on effects with regards to their desires to naturalise and become UK citizens. We argue that the latter could lead to conclusions that the relation between political rights and participation is more complex than suggested by Bauböck (1994). We argue that migrants' sense of belonging and levels of trust in public institutions (such as government) are just as important as access to political rights and political participation in the subjective formation of citizenship.

Citizenship(s) as a legal status

As EU migrant residents in Scotland, our participants held a number of citizenship statuses including EU citizenship, Polish citizenship and some held or were contemplating British citizenship. These forms of citizenships created complex and overlapping forms of affiliations and membership. For our participants EU citizenship gave them an access to a range of civil, social and some political rights. The uncertainty about the future rights of EU citizens following 'Brexit' negotiations resulted in increased feeling of insecurity over their rights and even ability to stay in the UK:

> *Changing the conditions on which the basis EU citizens live and reside in the UK is very difficult to accept, we have rights now, but after the referendum we might not have rights. EU citizens could have their rights being taken away from them without being able to have a say…. Right now that sense of security is being taken away; we are being told that we may not be able to stay here.*
> Basia, Glasgow

The future of rights of EU residents in the UK following Brexit has become one of the key focus in the public debate. In describing her experiences Basia refers to erosion of the rights of EU citizens but also the need to defend them. Such attitude could refer to what Ellison (2000) calls 'defensive citizenship engagement' where citizenship activity is encouraged by the pursuit or defence of particular interests and/or rights, in this context, existing EU citizenship rights in the UK. One of the methods applied by our participants to preserve their rights following Brexit, was naturalisation. However, it should be emphasised that those of our participants who contemplated taking this step only refer to the gaining of British citizenship in an instrumental way, that is in reference to the strategy of minimising risks and securing their rights following Brexit. However, there was little consensus amongst our participants with regard to their justifications or motivations for considering naturalization (or

not). This however resonates with Moreh et al. (2018) findings that naturalization intentions are often shaped by the mere entitlement to apply for citizenship and initial reasons for migration and interest in legal integration options. This finding also signals that preferences for naturalisation are partly rooted in broader social and interpersonal processes that are beyond the Brexit. While naturalisation and subsequent British citizenship provide our participants with security, they tend to indicate several reasons for not considering naturalisation. For our participants, the process of naturalisation was allegedly costly (total costs £1,806[1]) and legally overcomplicated. For example, one of our participants Marta was opposed to becoming British through naturalization as she saw this as '*a rather exclusive privilege'*. In addition to the financial sacrifices, our participants outlined other emotional costs related to the stress of going through long and over-complicated procedure, time for attending classes and sitting exams. For example, David listed a number of documents he was required to provide as part of his application for the permanent residency card[2] to then be eligible to naturalise:

> *A whole list of documents certifying that I've lived here; generally the documents need to include bank statements showing transactions over the period of the last five years, P60s, utility bills, letters from employers. (…) the application is 90 pages long, it makes me think that it has been designed by the UK government for one purpose only to discourage people from applying* Dawid, Edinburgh

Our participants like Dawid tend to describe the naturalisation process as legally overcomplicated with the proof of credibility lying in hands of migrants. According to Dawid, overcomplicated design of the naturalisation process correspond with the general hostile environment towards migrants which makes it difficult for migrant to live and settle in the UK. However for Dawid, the sense of insecurity regarding rights derived from EU citizenship was significant in determining naturalisation intentions and as a result he decided to naturalise in order to secure his rights to stay as well as to travel:

> *I've lived in this country for 11 years, and I would also like to stay here but also have opportunity to travel.*
> Dawid, Edinburgh

While Dawid decided to naturalise for instrumental reasons, others, like Basia refused to apply for British citizenship because she did not feel British but instead described herself as '*Pole living abroad'*. Indeed, migration from Poland to the UK has been described as 'open-ended' and 'fluid' with migrants increasingly experience of transnational living (Pietka-Nykaza and McGhee 2017). Therefore, Basia's understanding of citizenship emphasize

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[1] These costs include: £1330 for naturalization, biometrics £19.20, English language £180, Life in the UK test £50, ceremony £80, passport £82.25, translation of documentations £65 for single page

[2] As part of the naturalisation process EU nationals are required in first instance to apply for the Permanent Residency Cards that proves their five years residency in the UK

the importance of intersections between transnational living multiple affiliations and membership to both country of residence and country she left behind. It also suggests that transnational living, as well as local practices equally shape Polish migrants' understandings of citizenship (Erdal and Lewicki 2016). Indeed, the inconsistencies in political rights led to our participants to reflecting upon spatiality of their citizenships. That is Basia's narrative illustrate that her sense of belonging was located in various sites including regional (Scotland), state (Poland) and supra-state (EU) forms of citizenship and that these functioned in complementary ways.

Sense of belonging

All of our participants expressed their frustrations at being disfranchised from the EU Referendum especially after being enfranchised in the Scottish Independence Referendum:

> *We can vote in Scotland but can't in the Great Britain despite the fact that they're the same country… It's very selective and lacks coherence, similarly to the government's viewpoint on staying or leaving the EU and the case of migrants… I have lived here for eight years, always worked, paid taxes, done everything the right way but when it comes to having to make an important decision, I get excluded*
> Basia, Edinburgh

In many cases our participants' emphasis on subjective aspects of belonging was presented alongside their assertions in terms of being contributors in throughout being hardworking, tax and bill payers as reflected by Basia above (see further discussion in Piętka-Nykaza and McGhee 2015; McGhee et al 2019). However, it is the gap between their subjective sense of being part of the citizenry of Scotland in the run-up to the Independence Referendum and their disenfranchisement from the more objective conception of citizenship associated with full 'national-level' political rights that illustrates the complexities and heterogeneity of their perspectives of their citizenship and sense of belongings. Our participants find themselves in what Balibar calls 'the gray area' where 'individuals are neither completely included nor completely excluded' (2015: 73) from the community of citizens. However, disfranchisement and the outcome of the EU referendum combined with increasing racist incidents against EU citizens in the context of Brexit negotiations (Rzepnikowska, 2018) and resulted in our participants feeling more secure in Scotland (in comparison to the rest of the UK). This was articulated by Marta:

> *After the results I felt I was safer being here, in Scotland. I felt welcomed and appreciated, and I have no idea really what some friends of mine who live in London and around, or those in other parts of England, must have felt like*
> Marta, Glasgow

While Scotland voted to remain in the EU (62 % voted to remain in the EU), the leave won a majority of votes in England (53.4% to leave EU) and Wales

(52.5 % to leave EU) [3]. The regional differences in the EU referendum results are often attributed to 'cotland's different approach to immigration. Scotland's pro-migration ethos was also often articulated by our participants when discussing the EU citizens voting rights in the Independence Referendum. Basia exhibits this particular apprehension:

> *And perhaps it's because Scotland offered me the right to vote [in the Scottish Independence Referendum], that I feel closer to this country than to the rest of the Great Britain*
> Basia, Edinburgh

A number of our participants like Basia, equated their Referendum enfranchisement to a 'progressive' Scotland which had further implications for their sense of belonging in their country of residence. This could imply that migrant's political rights in the country of residence (through granting migrants political rights) could result in forging a greater sense of belonging to the polity (Mason, 2000) and thus enhancing their senses of attachment and belonging to their country of residence.

However, as result of the United Kingdom deciding to leave the EU, Polish migrants will no longer benefit from free movement and will loose other EU social rights and protections that will not be transposed into domestic law and will likely come to an end (i.e. European Health Insurance Card). In addition to restrictions to EU national rights, Brexit introduce further economic and social consequence, which include slower economic growth, community tensions and immigration uncertainty (Hapburn, 2020) that will add further element of hardship as well as uncertainty to the complexity of Polish migrants' migration and settlement strategies (Pietka-Nykaza and McGhee, 2017). While Polish migrants strategies of migration following Brexit will require further research, our study shows that those participants who felt settled in Scotland expressed their desire to stay and live there:

> *If the UK leaves the EU … This will not change the fact that I see Scotland as my home though and I really don't feel like going anywhere else.* Magda, Glasgow

Summary: Unfinished character of citizenship

By exploring migrants' experiences from their own perspective and thus seeing migrants as political agents, this article provides a contribution to a growing body of UK research that privileges migrants' perspectives and political agency (for example, Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2006; Driver and Garapich 2012). This paper provides greater understandings of complex relations between the citizenship attributes among migrant communities (e.g. Polish migrants) in the context of political change and uncertainty. Looking

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[3] Electoral Commission, EU referendum results, 2017, Available at: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/electorate-and-count-information (Accessed on 01 May 2017)

closely at the concept of the citizenship constellation, the data presented in this paper shows how citizenship attributes are in flux and how they can become altered at times of political change. Through a particular focus on changing relations between our participants opportunities for political participation, legal status and sense of belonging, we explored the recasting of citizenship in the context of complex social-cultural transformations related to the Scottish Independence Referendum and the UK's Referendum on EU membership. In this context, Polish migrants experience fragmented citizenship resulted from what they perceived to be the inconsistency and disruptions to their formal political rights. These disruptions and inconsistencies provided migrants the opportunity to reflect on the different formal and informal compositions of citizenship including national (Scotland, Poland) and supra-national (EU) citizenships as well as objective (formal, legal status) and the subjective features (feeling of belonging) of their citizenship constellations. As such, this paper illustrates complex interrelations but also divergence between our participants' political rights, formal citizenship status and sense of belonging. It was through the process of engaging with and participating in the Scottish Independence Referendum our participants articulated a sense of belonging to Scotland (in contrast with the UK as a whole). As a result, some of our participants who felt secure and settled in Scotland actually expressed their interest in a possible application for Scottish citizenship (rather than UK citizenship). In contrast to an inclusive Scotland, our participants expressed their frustration at being disfranchised from the UK's EU referendum. The experience of fragmented political rights was attributed to the UK Government's anti-immigration ethos (in contrast to Scotland) which had further implications for our participants sense of belonging to the UK and which was expressed in the form of a trust deficit towards the UK Government. The latter was compounded and evidenced in the participants stated opposition to becoming British citizens through naturalization. These experiences however articulate the importance of migrants' sense of belonging and levels of trust in public institutions (such as government) in the subjective formation of citizenship. It also illustrate how mechanisms of in-/exclusion within the arrangements of citizenship reflects the privilege of rights awarded to the members of the political community that also articulate who has the privilege of belonging (Yuval-Davis et al., 2018).

Our research also shows that perceived disruptions of Polish migrant residents political rights between the Independence Referendum and the EU Referendum has resulted in many feeling frustration; confused and concerned about the inconsistencies and uncertainties of the formal-legal arrangement of their citizenship status following the UK's decision to leave from the EU. It is also through the experiences of frustration and anxiety that number of participants have also rejected the opportunity to naturalise. As illustrated in the interviews, British citizenship was mainly articulated as an instrumental means to maintaining the opportunity with regards to future decision on where in the EU they want to reside. Resistance to naturalisation can be directly related to Polish migrant residents attitude of disputing the existing legal-formal composition of their citizenships (both state and sub-state) which they perceived as not adequately accommodating their experiences. It is also in Polish migrant residents expressions of their frustrations we can observe what

Ellison's called 'defensive engagement' following the UK's EU Referendum. In this context our participants' citizenship is best understood as a series of 'temporary solidarities' that can be characterised by 'defensive' forms of engagement to protect or maintain their social, political and civic rights (Ellison, 2000:1) following Brexit. What we have observed in this particular context is the emergence of a more assertive sense of having a stake in the country of residence (that is Scotland) among EU citizens, which is characterized by their greater willingness to participate in 'their hosts' political affairs (Martiniello, 2006). These responses however resonate with Polish migrants struggles for full citizenship rights and can be seen as evidence of the 'imperfection' of citizenships under construction (Balibar, 2015) during times of political change.

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