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New migrants, new destinations

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The views expressed in this paper are those of the author.

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Abstract

Although there are no precise figures for the number of new migrants in the labour force, the available statistics on EU-8 nationals who have registered their presence suggest that, in the UK, their number is growing and that in some regions and in some industrial sectors or occupations, they form a significant section of the workforce. The geographical spread of migrant workers in the UK is now much wider than even a few years ago. Migrants are no longer found only in large conurbations but increasingly are working in rural areas or in regions that have had little or no previous history of migration, whether temporarily or for settlement. Recent migration to the UK not only has involved new groups of migrants but also has brought migrants to areas of the UK that had not previously hosted diverse communities and where infrastructures to assist newcomers integrate successfully did not exist or were weak. This paper investigates the experiences of A8 migrants who have come to the UK, either before or since Accession. It looks at the circumstances that encouraged their migration, their pathways into the UK, including the extent to which employment was accessed through third party agencies, and their relationships with local workers, other migrants and with local communities with shared histories.

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Since May 2004 migrants from A8 countries have been coming to the UK in increasing numbers. They have joined existing communities of migrants from these countries, who either had migrated in the years immediately after the Second World War, or more recently in the period prior to Accession. Although there are no accurate figures on the numbers who have arrived, the registration scheme, introduced when A8 state nationals were permitted entry, at least records the numbers who have registered their presence. The latest Accession Monitoring Report shows that more than 500,000 A8 citizens have registered to work in the UK. This figure is accepted as an under-estimate, as there is no robust mechanism for enforcing registration. There is a fee to register and, particularly for those who were already in the UK prior to May 2004, there appear to be few benefits in registration.

This paper, based on data from interviews with 74 A8 nationals, seeks to explore:

- The circumstances that led A8 nationals to migrate;
- The role of agencies and labour providers both in creating pathways to the UK and in providing first and subsequent employment;
- How the registration scheme operated and why some still work 'illegally';
- The position that they have in the labour market, the type of jobs that they do their perceptions of their labour market position, compared to that of UK workers and of migrants from other countries; and
- The extent to which A8 nationals have interacted with host communities with whom they share a cultural or historical past.

Methodology

The paper draws its data primarily from two studies. The first was a one-year study in the course of which 200 recent migrants, working within five regions of the UK, were interviewed. The study was commissioned by the UK Health and Safety Executive and its aim was to explore the extent to which the health and safety of recent migrants to the UK might be compromised at work, and if this was the case, whether this was as a consequence of their being recent migrants per se, or of the type of work that they were engaged in. The second study was in one region of the UK - the East of England - and was commissioned by the East of England Development Agency, the body with responsibility for the region's economic development. In the course of that study interviews with 49 recent migrants were undertaken. The remit of the study was to explore the skills that new migrants might potentially bring to the region and to evaluate the extent to which these skills were being utilised in their current work. Both studies were mainly qualitative, although in each a small amount of quantitative data was obtained, mainly through survey questionnaires to employers and which were aimed at locating the qualitative research data within a wider context. In both studies the migrant workers interviewed came from a wide range of countries of origin, but within both studies A8 nationals made up a significant part of the overall sample. In the

HSE study 61 of the 200 migrants (31 per cent) were from A8 states, and in the EEDA study 13 of the 49 migrants (27 per cent) were also A8 nationals and it is these data, from all 74 interviews, that this paper is based upon. In the larger study, most of those interviewed had been in the UK for a relatively short period of time, with 31 per cent having been here for less than a year, 16 per cent for less than two years and 12 per cent for less than three years. In the remaining cases their length of time in the UK was not indicated. In the smaller study there was a larger percentage that had been in the UK for two or more years. However, in both studies none of the interviewees had been in the UK for more than five years. This was because the definition of migrant worker used in the research included that they had been in the UK for less than five years, as the aim of both studies was to understand the employment situation of newly arrived migrants.

Table 1 shows the countries or regions of origin of the 200 migrant interviewees in the HSE study, together with the sector that they were working in at the date of the interview. A8 interviewees made up 31 per cent of the total interviewees, but were more dominant two sectors - construction and agriculture - than in the other sectors investigated, with 56 per cent of the construction interviewees and 44 per cent of the agriculture sector interviewees coming from A8 states. In contrast just 14 per cent of interviewees in healthcare originated in A8 states. Although none had been in the UK for longer than five years at the date of the interview some had been in the UK prior to 1 May 2004. Of these, some had entered through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) and had overstayed. Some had entered as self-employed workers and a few had entered without documents. One interviewee had originally come as an asylum seeker and another had come under a student visa. All A8 nationals were, of course, EU citizens by the date of the interview.

Table 1: Origin and sector of migrants in the HSE study

Origin	Agriculture	Construction	Processing/ packaging	Healthcare	Cleaning	Hotels/ restaurants	Others*	TOTAL
Portugal	0	2	10	0	1	7	1	21
A8	4	14	18	4	6	11	4	61
Other European (inc Russian)	2	6	2	2	1	0	1	14
Middle East	1	1	14	0	0	4	0	20
SE Asia (inc. China)	1	0	7	3	5	6	1	23
Latin America	1	1	5	0	2	1	0	10
Sub Saharan Africa	0	0	8	9	6	3	0	26
Philippines	0	0	0	9	0	1	3	13
S Asia	0	1	3	2	2	4	0	12
All origins	9	25	67	29	23	37	10	200

In terms of their length of time in the UK, as Table 2 shows, A8 nationals were predominant among those who had arrived within the year prior to the study. This reflects the fact that they mainly arrived following May 2004. Seventy-five per cent of A8 nationals within the sample of 200 had been in the UK for less than two years. In contrast this applied to only 15 per cent of those from the Middle East, 25 per cent of those from Portugal, 30 per cent of those from South East Asia, 23 per cent of those from Sub-Saharan Africa, 23 per cent from the Philippines and 25 per cent from South Asia. Latin America was the only other group where more than half (in that case 60 per cent) had arrived in the last two years. But the number overall of migrants from Latin America in the sample was small (ten) and therefore it would be very difficult to generalise in any way from that small number.

Table 2: Number of years in the UK

Origin	<1 yr	<2yrs	<3yrs	<4yrs	<5yrs	>5yrs
Portugal	5%	20%	20%	25%	25%	5%
A8	54%	21%	15%	3%	1%	5%
Other European (inc Russian)	7%	21%	-	7%	57%	7%
Middle East	-	15%	45%	15%	15%	10%
SE Asia (inc. China)	13%	17%	22%	17%	26%	4%
Latin America	10%	50%	40%	-	-	-
Sub Saharan Africa	-	23%	19%	19%	23%	15%
Philippines	-	23%	38%	31%	8%	-
S Asia	-	25%	17%	25%	25%	8%
All origins	20%	22%	21%	14%	17%	6%

Motivations for migration

In the EEDA study we found that migrants' stated motivations for coming to work in the UK were primarily economic, although some respondents reported a combination of factors that had led them to migrate to Britain. There were four principle motors for migration: unemployment in country of origin; the opportunity to earn more money in the UK; better opportunities for their families in the UK; and a combination of economic and political reasons. Similar reasons were given in the HSE survey. The EEDA employers' survey also confirmed that economic reasons were the most important ones, explaining why migrants came to Britain, with 30 of the 35 employers of migrant workers stating that, in their view, this accounted for migrants' chief motivation. Lesser reasons were given as "*improving English skills*" and "*gaining work experience*". According to the employers very few came to travel or visit friends. However, our interviews with the migrant workers did reveal that a desire for travel and family reunion were also significant factors in the decision to seek work in another country.

If we take just the A8 nationals' responses from the two studies, these show similar but not identical motivations to those in the overall study. Although A8 nationals suggested a variety of reasons for migration, two primary reasons were given. The first was that migration provided them with the opportunity to earn money relatively quickly, for example, to save enough to continue studies or to set themselves up in their country of origin. The second was as a response to a poor economic situation in their country of origin. A8 interviewees did not cite better opportunities for their families as reasons for migration and this reflects the fact that this group was less likely to be in the UK with their family. Although some interviewees had migrated with their spouses or partners, very few of the 74 interviewees had come with their families. In contrast, within the overall study group there was more evidence of settlement intentions among many of those interviewed and this was premised on family unification, after assessments had been made about wider social benefits of migration to the UK.

A8 interviewees were more likely to identify a lack of jobs, high levels of unemployment and of few opportunities in their countries of origin as the reasons that had led to their individual decisions to migrate. For example, Vaida was a university graduate who had worked as a project manager in Lithuania. In Wales she was working as a packer in a food factory. Salaries in Lithuania were low and she felt that she had no alternative but to leave her husband and three year old child to come to work temporarily in the UK. Ewilina was working in a bakery in London. While the job was not very well paid she believed that at least it was enough to provide for her needs. Contrasted with life in Poland, her financial situation in the UK was viewed as much better.

"I couldn't find work in Poland, I even tried to find something but with no success. My boyfriend also tried and found, but one salary was not enough to support us and we have a small flat, everything goes on bills and nothing is left for life. And here even if we don't work every day, even if we work three days a week, we have money to live on for the rest of the week".

Some also commented on working conditions (other than pay) being less favourable in their country of origin, referring to poor health and safety standards in particular. Those working in construction, for example, noted that in their own country, safety was less well regulated and jobs were more dangerous. Janusz had worked in construction both in Poland and in the UK and noted:

"It's much better here.... What they have been doing in Poland, it is one big catastrophe, nothing was done properly, it was not very safe. I have been working last year [in Poland], doing some insulation; it was 12 floors and if you would see in what way they put the scaffoldings you would hold your head, if you would see what it is the hair would stand on your head, nothing was done properly".

However, in a minority of cases previous employment in their country of origin was recalled more positively. Some migrants did feel that their work at home had been more personally fulfilling, as they had been able to work in jobs that

matched their skills and experience. Robert was working as a bus driver in the UK. He had worked as an electrician in Hungary and also as alarm installer describing these as good jobs that he had enjoyed. Similarly a Polish migrant spoke positively about his union activities in Poland, as vice president and later the president of a trade union.

One difference between the responses of A8 and non-A8 migrants in the two surveys was that within the former group it was more likely that we would find individuals who had been running small businesses in their country of origin. In these cases changes, partly resulting from the opening up of local markets to foreign business, had meant that it was no longer economically viable to continue to do this. Alexandra had worked at one time as a trained nurse but when her husband had opened a shop in Poland she had left nursing to work in it. Then the shop had to close and they were left with high amounts of debt. Migration was the only option and they had come to London. Although she had sought work as a nurse, it had been impossible to get a nursing job and she was working as a cleaner in a hotel. Luke was working in a food factory in the South West of England. In Poland he had run a newsagents' business, but with a 20 per cent unemployment rate in his town, the business could not be sustained and he had been forced to migrate. Jurij had come from Lithuania where he had his own business. However, increased competition following Accession had meant that there was no longer a future for him there and he was working as a crane operator in the East of England.

"I have my own business in my country but in 2004 Lithuania joined the European community and another big company came to Lithuania and it was nonsense to keep my business, to hold my business because I have shop, foodstuff. And I decided to go to England because I speak some English and German. And to try to earn money here."

The proximity of some of A8 states to the UK, in particular Poland, Latvia and Lithuania, which were the countries of origin of the majority of the A8 nationals in the study meant that there were proportionately more cases where individuals had attempted to return home at some stage after their initial migration. But finding that the situation had not improved sufficiently, they had returned to work in the UK. This could suggest that migration from A8 countries is more transitory than migration from other countries, that either are geographically more distant or where the prospects for radical changes in the country's economic situation appear more remote. Certainly, within the A8 group, those moving back and forth between country or origin and the UK had in mind that they needed to ensure that they would be able to return not if, but when the economic situation improved. Anton, for example, had come from Lithuania to the UK for the first time in 1998 and had worked on construction sites for about a year. He had then returned to Lithuania to try and find work in his own occupation but being unable to do so had come returned to the UK. By the date of the interview in 2005, he had in fact moved back to Lithuania three times, each time returning to the UK after a short period attempting to rebuild a life for him at home. Initially he had worked in the UK without

documents and then had registered under the Accession registration scheme some time after May 2004.

Those who saw their migration as very short-term (three to six months) generally expressed themselves as satisfied with their working conditions, mainly because they did not view these as anything other than temporary. Alexandra, a young Polish woman working as a cleaner, saw her work in that way:

“I know it is only for the summer but maybe that’s why I am happy because if I will know that I have to do this for I don’t know how long because of my friends or because I don’t have another job or something I will be really unhappy”.

Those for whom the prospects were that they would remain for more than a year were more critical of the situation that they found themselves in. It was also the case that they sometimes made it clear that while their motivations for migration meant that they had ‘accepted’ that there would be a period where working conditions were not good, this period should not be allowed to last indefinitely.

The role of agencies and labour providers

Within the overall HSE survey around one in four of the 200 migrant interviewees was employed through an agency. However, for the A8 nationals in the survey, agency work was more common and more than half had used agencies, particularly for their first employment. This was also the case in the EEDA study where eight of the 13 A8 nationals had come to the UK through agencies or accessed first employment through them. In general A8 nationals were more likely to have used agencies on first arrival in the UK. Given that a significant proportion of A8 migrants had arrived in the UK relatively recently, the proportion still accessing work through agencies was large and agency work remained the primary source of work for the majority of A8 respondents.

The study also finds some evidence of interviewees having experienced deterioration in terms and conditions, the longer they had worked through an agency. For example, Januz from Poland had arrived in the UK in July 2004, shortly after Accession. He had previously worked in France but had heard about a job from an agency in Poland. Initially he was paid what he felt was a good wage but it then started to fall, and after some time in the UK he was earning just £130 a week, and was being paid less than the national minimum wage. No tax and National Insurance were being deducted and in addition he had not been registered under the Accession scheme. In his opinion this lack of registration had added to the precariousness of his employment position. Although the agency provided him with free accommodation, he did have to pay separately for transport to and from work and this amount was deducted from his wages. Furthermore he was paid through the agency weekly by cheque but given that he did not have a bank account he had to have the

cheque cashed for him, for which another £10 a week was deducted from what he received in pay. He had to provide own boots although other protective clothing was provided. Eventually Januz joined a trade union, which persuaded the employer that he worked for to employ him directly. Consequently his pay more than doubled. Commenting on his situation while working through the agency, he recalled that he and his colleagues were 'really scared we would get into trouble with the Inland Revenue' and this had dissuaded them from challenging the agency's poor working terms.

Many of those interviewed regarded agency work as inferior and less satisfactory in comparison with direct employment, often because it was much less secure. As Mariauz from Poland noted:

"In the agency one thing is never sure whether one will get work on that day. In the agency one lives with uncertainty all the time".

For Albinas, from Lithuania, agencies were exploitative of migrant workers:

'I don't trust like these agents, normal agents, agents' companies I don't trust because they're liars. I was working, I don't know, I was working but I know those companies just take from people the [organisation] gives in England one week job, two weeks. Employer said you're no good, what do you want, what to do, and not able to stay, no money, no nothing. I don't know just -so that's the way I think, to find a job, it's from my friends, from family, people who was here before, was here longer. in Lithuania one agent, picking the people there. They [migrants] just want to come back to Lithuania to return here, to his own country. Because we don't really see really a future here'.

However, for some migrants agencies were also a route to accessing employment quickly, and with the fewest formalities. Alexandra made the point.

"I know if I can go to agency and they would give me something, I knew it'd be only cleaner or something but still some job, so I feel quite safe about money, about jobs. It is not like Poland that you can't get any job".

The registration scheme

When the government agreed to allow A8 nationals to come to work in the UK it set up a system of registration to allow it to monitor the number of migrants arriving following Accession in May 2004. The data has been used to construct Accession Monitoring Reports. While there is no corollary data on those who has not registered, anecdotally it has been noted that large numbers of A8 nationals may have failed to register, either because they were already in the UK working without authorisation before May 2004 or had arrived after May 2004 but could perceive no advantage in paying the registration fee, in those cases where their employers had not been agreeable to pay the fee. The data from the research studies also showed that some A8 migrants do not register. Of course, some had immediately registered, either registering themselves or getting their employers to register them. For some

the fact that they would be working legally was very important, as in the case of Violetta, a young woman from Poland who said:

'I was looking for the job, legal job with the contract, insurance and everything because I think it's more safe for a woman. I wasn't interested in the illegal job, no legal was the most important.'

However, this was not necessarily true of all the interviewees. Of the 61 A8 nationals in the HSE study more than half had arrived following accession but either had not registered or were unsure as to whether or not they had, suggesting that they probably had not. In total around one in three of the A8 nationals in the HSE study were either unregistered at the date of the interview; had been unregistered at some stage of their period of working in the UK post May 2004; or had been in the UK prior to that date and had been undocumented. For some this position had not necessarily been their choice. Lukasz a bricklayer, who had also been a construction worker in Poland, had been told by the agency that his employers would pay for his registration, but later found that this was not the case and having worked for some time could not then see the advantage of registering. Mariauz had originally worked in construction without having been registered, although in his case he had eventually registered once employed directly by the employer, he said of his first job:

"No it wasn't legal, we were not registered. We didn't pay NI or anything. It was illegal. So we went to the agency and there we were at least legal, registered and insured".

There were other issues that also made them unsure as to their status. In some cases, despite having been in the UK for several months, workers had still not been able to obtain National Insurance numbers and this made them uncertain about their legal rights to work, even in those cases where they had registered. Certainly a number of the A8 migrants interviewed spoke of not having obtained National Insurance numbers and of working 'off the books', despite having a legal right to work.

In the EEDA study, a majority of the A8 nationals had already been in the country prior to May 2004 and might have been working under permitted schemes like SAWS or alternatively had been working without documentation. Accession did not necessarily act as an imperative for registration in these situations, as workers were by that stage already established in employment, and for some there was a view that applying for registration might cause a spotlight to be placed on them and on their work situation prior to registration. Furthermore some interviewees expressed the view that, in an increasingly tight labour market, due to large numbers of recent migrants competing for jobs, working 'illegally' was the only way to secure employment, as employers did not want the to have to comply with employment laws. In these cases there was absolutely no advantage in registration but the worker then had to accept poor working conditions, as Mariauz noted:

"I didn't have any H&S training before because it was illegal work, if I may say so. I came and needed work so I worked".

Anna, working as a hotel cleaner, initially did not realise that she had not been registered and on finding out six months later had registered. Wojciech had initially worked without registration, although he too eventually had registered, as had Peter, a carpenter from Poland. There were others who had tried to register but had not succeeded or did not know how to go about it.

The working conditions of A8 and other migrants

Although many interviewees from A8 countries believed that employers hired them because they represented cheaper labour, they did not think that they had caused local labour rates to decline. Rather they viewed local labour as in a privileged position, getting higher pay and doing less onerous work. Lukasz said he had been paid less than UK workers and while he accepted that there could be some differences in pay between migrant wages and those of local workers, he objected to the size of the differential, 'because we are cheap labour for them, but ok we don't mind to get paid less, but we get only half of what they earn'. In the view of Ryszard, a Polish worker working in a bar, 'the jobs that we do, the English person doesn't want to do'. Wojciech a worker from Lithuania, currently working in a food factory, had a similar experience, 'Only English working the day shift get that. They have a contract to do so much, but why would they make too much effort if the Polish come and do it cheaper'. For Daniel the difference was also in the way that people did their work:

'In my opinion people like me they just care more about the job, that is they would work harder in order to keep that job in here and if you observe English people, they are less, their attitude to work is more relaxed, if they don't do something they don't really care, they don't worry about things as much as migrant workers do'.

Vaida from Lithuania similarly felt that local workers had been advantaged at the expense of migrants.

'We work almost every day we have to stand on our [own] feet but we have chairs but it's not enough for everyone, and usually British takes, they take chair from us other others other foreigners they think so too'.

Interviewees also complained of local workers not socialising with them. Pavilina a Czech working in transport, noted 'They [are] complaining about [us], like they don't like to sit with us, they don't like to be with us'. Gabriel from Slovakia, similarly commented on this lack of interaction from local workers, 'I don't think that we are discriminated [against], just nobody talking with us, just we are working, nobody cares about us'. Boguslaw from Poland spoke of how he viewed discrimination at work:

'One doesn't feel direct discrimination, but one feels that those who come from new accession countries they have to work for little money, work very hard, much harder than others and very fast. This is what is expected from us. Here in London at least they are perfectly aware of what conditions we have at home and that they can expect much more from us. If they didn't know the situation maybe they would pay us more'.

Anton painter from Lithuania was careful when discussing discrimination, and keen to distance his experience from that of discrimination. However, he noted:

'But I don't think there is discrimination in this aspect. I think it is just, you know, when a person they get better job than me, in my company, it's like, yes, they English, but they are friend of foreman or managers. They are probably - you can become the friend of the foreman or manager if you are English, just because, like interests and better language. Don't get paid more, sometimes ...sometimes, they get better jobs, better work, they always like better work. It's not like I'm concerned, I get good jobs a lot. There are so many migrant painters on our company, they all get the same.'

One worker referred to the fact that migrants always got the heaviest work.

'Maybe it would have been better if for example we would do the cobble stones as well as the heavy work, as it's nothing really. But as it was light work, someone else was doing it and we were needed to do the hardest work. So you say that you were exploited in this way because you were'.

Generally, in the view of interviewees migrant workers' conditions were worsening, with pay rates spiralling downwards, as new arrivals competed within a tighter labour market. When asked how their employment situation compared to that of other migrants in the workplace, most interviewees thought that all migrants were treated the same. However, some did say that, in relation to black migrants, their treatment was generally worse, than the treatment received by white migrants. For example, Peter, a Polish worker on a construction site, spoke of Chinese migrants working on the site being paid just £50 a day, compared to the £75 he was earning. Mevludin from Bosnia, referring to how his manager treated black workers, noted, 'sometimes the manager he saying nasty things, especially he was trying to laugh at the Pakistani groups like Indians or calling bad names'.

Not only was the pay of black workers felt to be worse, so too were their wider conditions of work. Ryszard, the Polish worker commented, 'They do treat you differently if your skin colour is different, if they see I am white then they don't, but if someone else yes'. Workers also described workplaces where shifts were organised almost entirely on ethnic lines. For example, Mariusz worked in a bakery and described the organisation of work as follows, 'The morning shift is mainly Sri Lankan people, in the afternoon when I work most people are from Algeria and now Poland, and the night shift is mainly black people. First I think English person wouldn't work there'.

Barbara, a care assistant from Poland, thought that already there were fewer jobs going and also that terms were worsening, particularly for black workers.

'I don't know what the standards are, but I know that we work too many nights because there restrictions. And offering additional night shifts is exploitation, because these people will do it. ... I know there were four black nurses and because of the racism from the residents they resigned. It is generally directed to all foreigners, but people of colour have a really big problem'.

Another way of assessing the extent to which workers felt discriminated against is to look at the extent to which they assess their jobs as putting their health and safety at risk. Those who perceived their jobs as posing risks inevitably viewed their employers as being less concerned about protecting their safety and were more likely to assess their treatment as less favourable. As can be seen from Table 3, A8 nationals were less likely than any other national group to assess their jobs as carrying major risks. The table also suggests that there is some relationship between level of risk and ethnicity, with workers from sub-Saharan Africa and the Philippines associating their jobs with risk.

Table 3: Migrant risks at work by country of origin

Origin	No risks	Minor risks	Major risks
Portugal	28%	50%	22%
A8	30%	50%	20%
Other European (inc Russian)	17%	56%	28%
Middle East	24%	44%	32%
SE Asia (inc. China)	38%	38%	25%
Latin America	38%	38%	25%
Sub Saharan Africa	18%	56%	26%
Philippines	8%	62%	31%
S Asia	25%	38%	38%
All origins	26%	48%	26%

Interviewees were asked to what extent the type of work they were doing had impacted on their physical health. Overall only seven per cent of the interviewees viewed their work health situation positively. For A8 interviewees, the response was similar to that of the overall sample, with eight per cent viewing their health as positive. However, A8 nationals were slightly less likely to see their work as having a negative impact on their health, and slightly more likely to view it as neutral. At the same time, what is remarkably consistent is how few over the whole sample did not associate migration and work with negative health consequences. And although it might be assumed that migrants from EU states were less likely to make these negative associations, the study does not suggest that this is the case to any significant extent.

Table 4: impact of work on physical health

Origin	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Portugal	6%	81%	12%
A8	8%	71%	22%
Other European (inc Russian)	0	83%	17%
Middle East	0	90%	10%
SE Asia (inc. China)	12%	71%	18%
Latin America	0	86%	14%
Sub Saharan Africa	5%	80%	15%
Philippines	11%	56%	33%
S Asia	14%	64%	21%
All origins	7%	75%	18%

Old and new communities

Although many migrants view London as their destination of choice, recognising it as a city of diversity, with many employment opportunities and with existing, established communities, providing important networks for new arrivals, a growing number of recent migrants have chosen to move to areas outside London. Although UK residents with historical roots in Central and East Europe can be found in many large cities, newly arrived A8 national have not necessarily chosen to locate themselves within these existing communities. For increasing numbers, the locations chosen have been in relatively new areas of migration. The East of England is a case in point. It is not a region that had previously experienced inward migration. In terms of its minority ethnic population, for example, it has one of the lowest percentages in the UK. According to the 2001 census, just seven per cent of the population had a country of origin that was not the UK. By contrast, the 2001 census shows that 27 per cent of London's population was born outside the UK. The Accession Monitoring Report confirms that the geographical spread of recent migration differs from that of previous migrations. Migrants are no longer found only in large conurbations but increasingly are working in rural areas or in regions that have had little or no previous history of migration, whether temporarily or for settlement. Accordingly the East of England is now the principal destination for A8 workers

The location of Stansted airport, with low cost flights to Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, is one reason for the choice of the East of England as a destination of migration. But there have been other reasons. The region is relatively prosperous, its economy has been booming, construction is on the increase, and the local unemployment rate is very low, at around three to four per cent. There have been large-scale labour shortages, particularly in low and semi-skilled occupations. Additionally, agriculture is a more significant sector than in other regions and is heavily reliant on casual and very flexible labour.

Thus recent migration to the UK not only has involved new groups of migrants but also has brought migrants to areas of the UK that had not previously hosted diverse communities and where infrastructures to assist newcomers integrate successfully did not exist or were weak. Although the evidence is tentative, there are some examples of recent migration encouraging local communities to expand their horizons by embracing new cultures and experiences. But these examples are also clouded with other incidents of poor local/migrant relationships, sometimes born out of misunderstandings, often out of prejudices and racism.

The data that we do have from the surveys suggest that there is limited if any contact between new A8 migrants and established communities with shared histories. A8 interviewees were less likely to perceive themselves as part of an established community or as having any community of interest with it. Unlike interviewees from Sri Lanka, China, Turkey, Algeria, Portugal and Malaysia who often identified with a pre-existing community and lived within it, A8 nationals were more likely to refer to close networks as being those of friends and acquaintances. Zbigniew is from Poland and worked in a food-processing factory. He noted:

'Foreigners, from Afghanistan for example, are better organised and help each other more. Polish people are not helpful to one another. When I was in Poland I heard this saying, which is not very nice, but true 'when abroad a Pole is the worst bastard to one another'. This is true. There are too many Poles here now and they are nasty to one another'.

Janusz, a construction worker from Poland, had on one occasion visited a Polish club and said that although he could communicate to some extent; many of those in the club did not speak Polish. A8 nationals were also less likely to relate to wider community networks, for example, religious organisations. Overall very few of the 200 migrants in the HSE sample spoke of having contacted church organisations, but A8 national were slightly less likely to have done with nine per cent of non-A8 nationals having made such contacts, compared to eight per cent of A8 nationals. Peter was one of the small number who spoke of having visited a Polish church in the UK. For him this 'is the best thing because everybody Polish goes to church'. However, even among those who had made contact, their assessment was not always positive. Edita knew of the Lithuanian church but commented 'there is nothing I mean, they are not organised', while Tomas, also from Lithuania, did think that the Lithuanian church might be of help although he had not approached it. In general, although interviewees did rely on networks, these consisted either of individuals they had known from their country of origin prior to departure or individuals of same country origin, whom they had met after migration. Within the A8 sample, 60 per cent (slightly lower than for the overall sample) referring to friendship networks.

Conclusion

This paper has noted that the number of migrants arriving in the UK in the last few years has grown significantly and that A8 migrants now constitute the majority of recent migrants to the UK. The paper notes that migrants share common experiences. They are likely to be working in specific sectors and occupations, are commonly earning at or around the national minimum wage and are more likely to be working longer hours and unsocial shifts. However, within these common elements of experience, there are significant differences. For A8 nationals, migration may still represent a defined period of change that is not necessarily viewed as permanent. A8 nationals may at present be more likely to locate their longer term aspirations, as represented by their plans for their future, in their country of origin, although this is not to say that such aspirations might not change, premised, in part, on the economic direction of their country of origin and the prospects for work and advancement there. Additionally the impact of racism and discrimination differently affects migrants, dependent on their ethnicity. As the paper suggests, A8 migrants are aware that there are differences in treatment, based on ethnicity and that, in some respects, their treatment at work may be more favourable than that of black migrants. Thus the paper does not argue that A8 migrants have an entirely different experience of migration, but rather that there are factors which do create differences and that it is important to acknowledge that they do exist. Among these factors are also the importances of social networks that are derived almost entirely from relationships based on country of origin, rather than on relationships with pre-existing, long term migrant communities.

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