Polish migrant workers in the north: integration and xenophobia

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Context

Long history of Polish and other migration to UK –

**CHOICE**

The accession (A8) - the facts?

Polish migration

**UK migration statistics**

“not fit for purpose…. little better than a best guess”

A8 migration

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<th>Source</th>
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<td>Census</td>
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May 2004 – May 2011

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Polish migration

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A new type of migration?
The government policy response

A crisis of governance?

• Joint working and alliances

• National policy discord?

Coalition and Labour policy now very much support this trajectory
Xenophobia

Project investigate moral panics and Polish migration:
• Data 124 questionnaires and 46 semi-structured interviews in the north – today talk about questionnaire responses.

Over half (63 of 124) of respondents had experienced some form of xenophobic incident. Of which 14 incidents were at work;

Where I live I was verbally abused

....newspapers articles...

my car was damaged and my home window was damaged...

Often it happens in poor districts of Manchester like Salford...

Frequent attacks on our estates, broken fences, broken glass...

...you can feel it when listening TV programmes that cover migrant issues.

...said I should leave country because Englishman cannot get a job...

...neighbour called me Polish whore...

...statement about taking British jobs...
Integration

Integrated into British society?:

53 out of 124 felt integrated;

- yes, good relations with people and neighbours.
- Yes, I am accepted and feel good in the community...
- Yes, I feel integrated into British society, because generally they are fantastic people....
- I guess I am generally yes, it’s hard to integrate with indigenous population but it’s even harder to integrate with your Polish migrant fellows.
- I have good relations...
- I do participate in local elections...

Membership of UK organisations:

- 11 were trade union members
- 5 involved in other UK NGOs (Church – volunteer at social services – free interpretation for organisations – drug addition).

- yes, I live and work exclusively with the British
- I probably have more British friends than Poles.
Integration

But only 39 felt integrated into their local Polish community;

9 worked with a Polish community organisation;

Interestingly there were 12 poor comments about fellow Poles;

...work in the factory for 12 hours - sort of Polish hell...

...in my town Poles do not want to integrate...

...I am not surprised about bad opinions that are circulating about Poles...

No, because Polish community is full of envy...

...do not speak English and have many pretentions.

...there is strong social distance among them [Poles] based on class and status...
Future research: Community formation

Our approach is to explore xenophobia further through a greater understanding of Polish community formation;

With so many new entrants we should expect to see diversity and indeed group formations around status and class;

Initially xenophobia seems to be less against those who are professional or middle class;

Overall we believe this formation around group ‘identity’ is a fruitful area of study.