

We are all post-socialist now!  
The UK economy and the  
transformation of east central  
Europe

Alison Stenning



“Stony-faced Brown gets ANOTHER lecture on the economy... from Poland’s prime minister”

# Trade and Investment

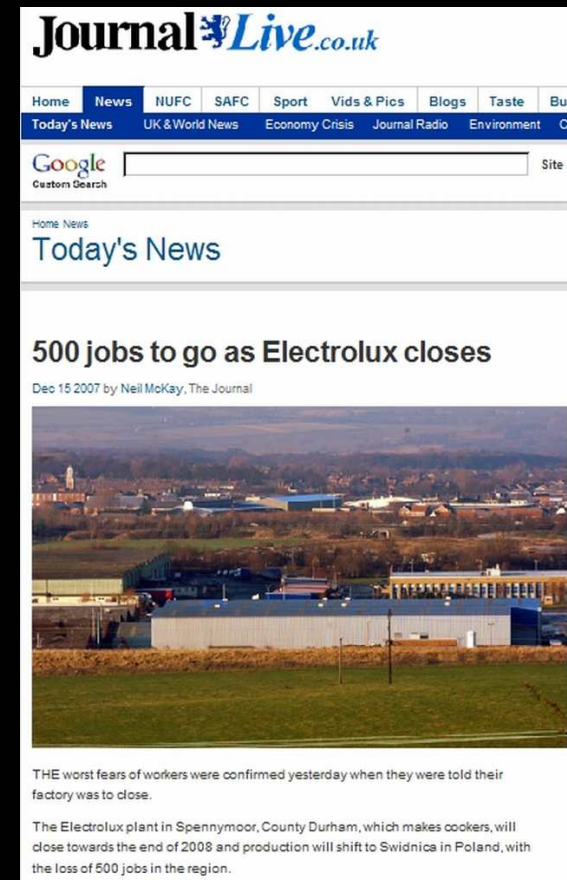
- annual UK trade with NMS
  - imports: £13.9 billion
  - exports: £7.7 billion
- 2001-08: significantly higher growth rates in imports/exports with key NMS
  - imports: Slovakia (31.3%), Poland (17.2%), Hungary (16.7%), Czech Republic (15.2%) [cf. 2.6%]
  - exports: Estonia (12.6%), Slovakia (11%), Poland (10.6%), Romania (10%) [cf. 4.9%]
- 927 firms with British capital invested in Poland, including 126 with investments > \$1 million
- growth in recent years of FDI **out** of ECE/FSU



NMS – new member states

# Competition and Cooperation

- cost-cutting manufacturing relocations east
  - e.g. Electrolux, Black and Decker, Indesit
- peripheral UK regions increasingly competing with their new neighbours for jobs and investment
- loss of structural funds as “the centre of gravity of the EU ... move[s] east”
- international cooperation: sharing interests, countering competition, imagining other Europes

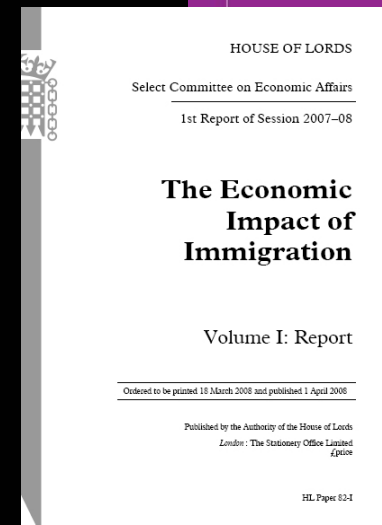
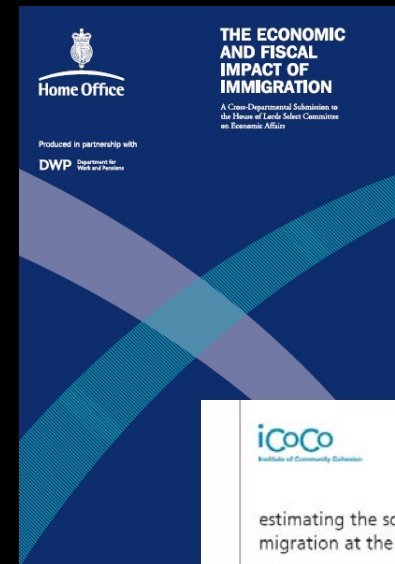


# Migration

- earlier waves of migration (late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup>; DPs and EVWs; post-war) ⇒ 180,000 eastern Europeans resident in UK in 2001
- over 100,000 seasonal workers (SAWS) and self-employed in early 2000s
- BUT 2002-2008, 1,242,200 National Insurance applications from NMS

# Labour

- contested assessments of impact of post-accession migration
- Home Office estimated £6 billion contribution to economic growth in 2006
- plugging 'hard-to-fill' vacancies (often low-skill and low-pay ... but not always)
- concerns about wages, unemployment and workforce development, especially among young workers and in 'workless' communities
- reinforcing reliance of UK public sector on migrant labour



# Labour II

- post-accession migration promoted by UK local and regional authorities as salvation of local economies and labour markets
- growth and development of employment agencies, both new specialist and multinational – increasingly in partnership with agencies/recruiters in ECE
- new transnational/bilingual forms of trade union organising



# Consumption

- ‘Polish pound’ valued at £8.4 billion in 2008
- targeted by numerous high street firms in all sectors
  - supermarkets, banks, mobile phone companies, DIY, bookshops etc.
  - new markets in difficult times
- Polish food “fastest-growing ethnic food range ever launched in Britain”
- beyond migrants: new tastes and product innovation
- swift and pronounced response
- connects to market activity and supply chains in Poland: migrants as entry point for further expansion in ECE
- public services: spatial mismatch between costs and benefits of migration



**Lloyds TSB** Strona główna O nas Procedura

**Konto w Wielkiej Brytanii**

**Złóż wniosek o założenie darmowego konta\* w Wielkiej Brytanii przed wyjazdem z Polski.**

Wybierz najbardziej godny zaufania bank Zjednoczonego Królestwa\*\* i zyskaj dostęp do 150 oddziałów, w których doradcy mówią po polsku.

Zadzwoń na bezpłatną infolinię, a nasi polskojęzyczni konsultanci pomogą Ci rozpocząć procedurę zakładania rachunku bankowego przez telefon. Po przyjeździe do Wielkiej Brytanii będziesz potrzebował tylko jednego dokumentu ze zdjęciem, żeby aktywować konto.

**Zadzwoń teraz**  
**00 800 55 69 55 69**  
Pon. - pt. 10.00 - 21.00

**O nas**  
Lloyds TSB to brytyjska grupa finansowa i ubezpieczeniowa. Została stworzona w 1995 roku poprzez połączenie Lloyds Bank i Trustee Savings Bank (TSB). [więcej →](#)

**Procedura**  
Złóż wniosek o założenie konta w Lloyds TSB przed wyjazdem z Polski. Skontaktuj się z naszym centrum telefonicznym... [więcej →](#)

\* Obsługa jest bezpłatna przy dodatnim saldzie na rachunku.  
\*\* LloydsTSB od sierpnia lat jest uznawany przez respondentów sondażu Readers Digest za najbardziej godny zaufania bank w Wielkiej Brytanii.  
Połączenie jest bezpłatne z większości telefonów stacjonarnych.  
Prosimy zwrócić uwagę na to, że operatory sieci komórkowych mogą naliczać opłaty z tytułu połączeń z numerem rozpoczynającym się na 00 800. O szczegóły należy pytać swojego dostawcę usług telefonicznej komórkowej.  
W trosce o najwyższą jakość usług rozmowy mogą być monitorowane lub nagrywane.  
Założenie konta jest uzależnione od oceny Twojej sytuacji finansowej. Aby złożyć wniosek o otwarcie rachunku musisz mieć ukończone 18 lat.

# Enterprise

The collage consists of several distinct advertisements:

- WYWÓZ ŚMIECI:** Waste removal services with contact numbers like 07966637973.
- POLAND EXPRESS LTD:** A company offering services in the UK, with contact info: Tel/Fax: 0208 4283 288, mob: 07951957573.
- SZUKASZ PRACY? (Do you want a job?):** An advertisement for job seekers, featuring a woman and contact details for Symbiont.
- POMYŚL O OCHRONIE! (Think about protection!):** An advertisement for security services, listing various locations like London, Manchester, and Birmingham.
- Letting Line:** Real estate services for rental properties in London.
- KURSY DLA ELEKTRYKÓW (Courses for electricians):** Training courses for electricians in the UK.
- Other smaller ads:** Various business listings and services, including 'STREFA' and 'STARTAX'.

- emergence of post-accession ‘migration industry’
  - media, training, recruitment, transport, money transfer, health, benefits, financial advice, wholesalers, retailers and producers
- some emerging from earlier self-employment, some with links to ‘mainstream’ providers
- extending beyond ‘ethnic niche’: e.g. Poles capitalising on other ECE communities
- SMES also serving demand in wider economy: construction, security, cleaning etc.
- development of business support services for would-be entrepreneurs: Business Link, RDAs, NGOs, banks



**przekazypieniężne.com**  
 Money System w UK

# Networks

- developing associational life
- including business support networks
- often small-scale and localised, but new economic actors engaged in transnational activities
- TN actors working between business environments east and west (UKTI; EEF)



# Geographies

- changing economic landscapes of cities and regions
  - competition for jobs, investment and structural funds
  - cooperation with previously distant partners
  - migrants living in every UK local authority, working alongside UK citizens and bringing new products and services
- new economic relationalities
  - creating transnational households
  - firms, TUs, LAs etc. extending activities and relationships to new places and new partners
  - new economic actors working between east and west

# Geographies II

- multidimensionality of flows: E-W, W-E, circular – varied temporalities and often indirect geographies
- return flows and ‘mobility’: familiarity with, attachment to, experience of UK products, services, practices, cultures ⇒ transnational enterprise, trade and investment – cooperating with 25,000 Britons living in NMS?
- ubiquitous but uneven – and a very different geography to previous waves of migration

# Conclusions

- the emergence – and development – of economic activities, which flow between the UK and ECE have transformed the UK's economic geography, remaking the economic landscapes of Britain's cities and regions and forging new economic relationships
- the scale of some of these transformations is small but they signify qualitative shifts in the UK's economic geography
- need for a fuller critical reflection on the post-socialist economic geographies of the UK and a fuller recognition that the twenty years of post-socialism have remade the economic relationships between east and west
- with such work, the *Daily Mail's* interpretation of the Tusk-Brown encounter – and economic geography's provincialising of post-socialist transformations – become untenable