

Northumbria Research Link

Citation: Fitzgerald, Ian (2014) Polish migrant workers in the north: integration and xenophobia. In: Newcastle University Human Resources Management, Work and Employment Research Group, 13 February 2014, Newcastle University.

URL: <http://research.ncl.ac.uk/hrmwe/researchevents/pas...>
<<http://research.ncl.ac.uk/hrmwe/researchevents/pastevents/>>

This version was downloaded from Northumbria Research Link:
<http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/25595/>

Northumbria University has developed Northumbria Research Link (NRL) to enable users to access the University's research output. Copyright © and moral rights for items on NRL are retained by the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. Single copies of full items can be reproduced, displayed or performed, and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided the authors, title and full bibliographic details are given, as well as a hyperlink and/or URL to the original metadata page. The content must not be changed in any way. Full items must not be sold commercially in any format or medium without formal permission of the copyright holder. The full policy is available online: <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/policies.html>

This document may differ from the final, published version of the research and has been made available online in accordance with publisher policies. To read and/or cite from the published version of the research, please visit the publisher's website (a subscription may be required.)

Polish migrant workers in the north: integration and xenophobia

Ian Fitzgerald

Faculty of Business and Law

Context

Research began in 2005 and has been extensive
current project colleague from Polish Academy of
Sciences;



Context



Workers Rights (crossed out)

TESCO RIP OFF WORKERS!

In Greenhills Distribution Centre

demand one
Reinstatae Zbyszek Bukala and Radek Sawicki

The agencies attempt to transfer them to work in another company is nothing more than silencing their voices of workers. There was not even an attempt to find a solution through dialogue.

demand two
All agency staff should get a contract after 3 months.

Contracted workers get over €500 a week, agency staff get just €320. There is no justification for such a policy. Three months on the agency's leash is enough. If Tesco need us, they should treat us as normal workers.

demand two
End the compulsory 1000 boxes a day pick rate.

Stop the raising of the daily norm. Intimidation and dismissal of workers who fall short of it can not be accepted. Everyone works to their physical abilities and health & safety regulations. we were taught in training.

TESCO
ripping off workers

see www.indymedia.ie for details

Labour Source Ltd (24hr contracts)

limited working within vulner' emp

agency workers

business employment

PRACA DLA POLAKÓW
Pilec!
PRACY LIND PRODUKCYJNET
Rekrutacja: 05.03.10
FULL TIME (5 dni w tygodniu)
Transport: z centrum Nowosól (nie uwzględniajcie)
Angebot für die polnische Bevölkerung:
I Agencja ODR
00405 766 888
Krajowa Sieć Dostaw

Adecco
better work, better life

Reef Recruitment

Tempco Staffing Ltd (contract for service)



Context

Data obtained at local, regional, national and international levels -

(i) firstly semi-structured interviews with key respondents (trade unions - government agencies - Citizens Advice Bureaux - Polish community activists;

(ii) Limited use of questionnaires first project questionnaire with 20 Polish building workers. Also EU work and Polish Internet project;

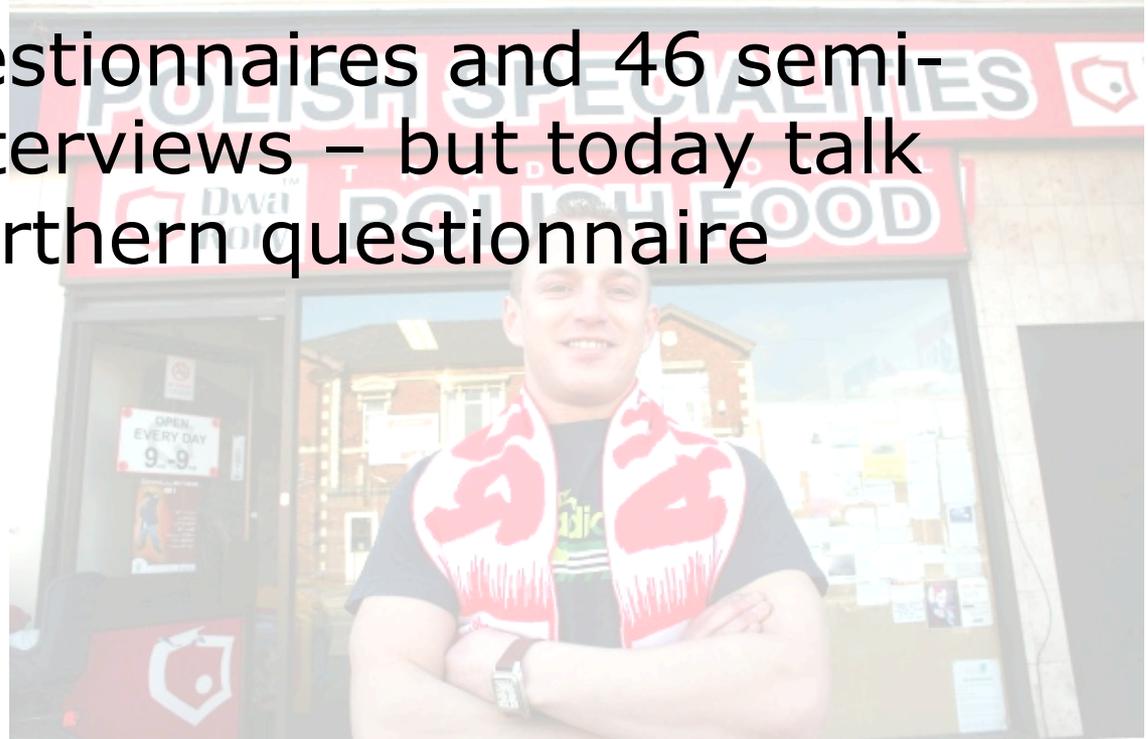
Attendance at Polish community events.



Integration

Current project is investigating moral panics and the Polish migration:

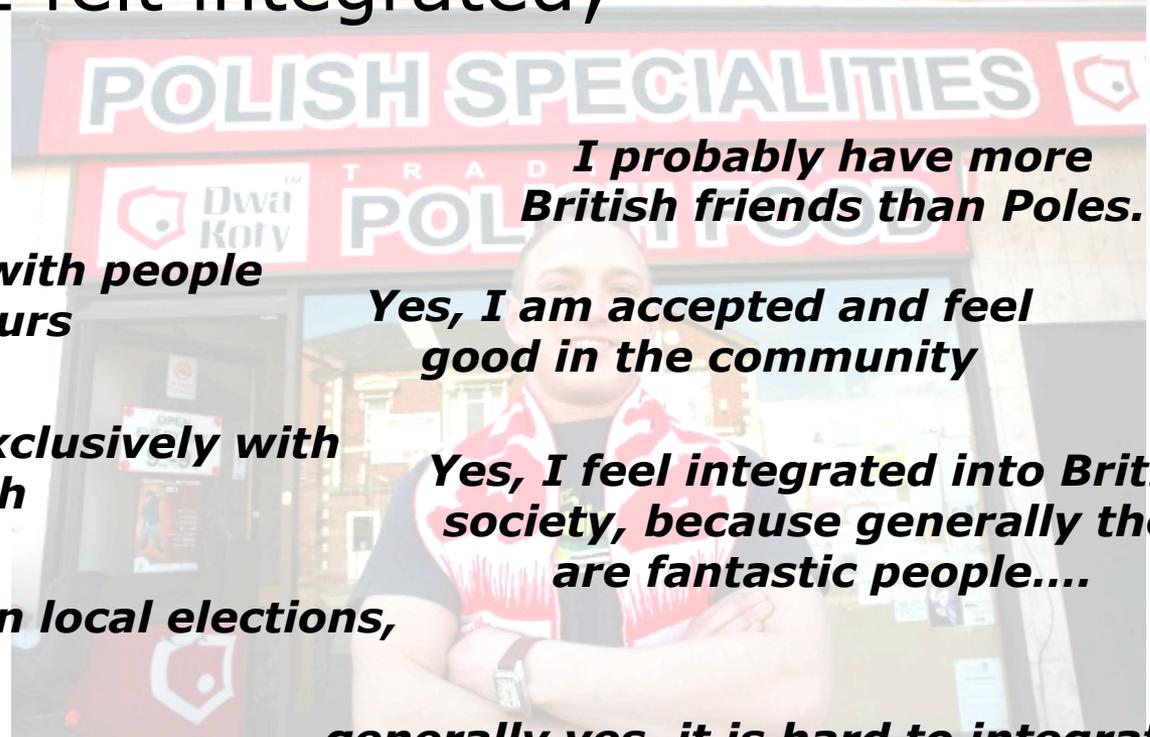
- Data 143 questionnaires and 46 semi-structured interviews – but today talk about 122 northern questionnaire responses.



Integration

Integrated into British society?:

- 51 out of 122 felt integrated;



I probably have more British friends than Poles.

yes, good relations with people and neighbours

Yes, I am accepted and feel good in the community

yes, I live and work exclusively with the British

Yes, I feel integrated into British society, because generally they are fantastic people....

yes, I do participate in local elections,

I guess I am

generally yes, it is hard to integrate with indigenous population but it is even harder to integrate with your Polish migrant fellows

I have good relations...

Integration

Membership of UK or Polish organisations:

7 were trade union members; *...work in the factory for 12 hours - sort of Polish hell...*

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

7 were involved in other UK organisations (Church – volunteer at social services – free interpretation for organisations – drug addition); *...I am not surprised about bad opinions that are circulating about Poles...*

But only 31 felt integrated into the local Polish community. With 11 poor comments about fellow Poles.

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

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

Xenophobia



Xenophobia

Over half (62 of 122) of respondents had experienced some form of xenophobic incident. Of which 14 incidents were at work;

Where I live I was verbally abused

...statement about taking British jobs...

...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.

...newspapers articles...

...neighbour called me Polish whore...

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

Xenophobia – cross cutting themes

Of those 62 who had incidents:

Only 18 felt integrated into British society;

But 24 felt integrated into the Polish community;

Nine were either union members or engaged in UK or Polish community organisations;

25 indicated poor working conditions but 18 of these noted a good economic situation in the UK;

Over half (36) 62 indicated that their economic situation was ‘good’ (overall 43 + 29 correct).

Conclusions

I want to be positive and state that 60 did not have any racial incidents. There has been significant growth of Polish shops and other 'cultural aspects', including business start-up;

But some of our media and Politian's preach a different narrative;

Theory? We might say Cohen and moral panics whilst discussing class and social capital;

But xenophobia as we know is cross cutting;

What is sad is that 92 (75%) of total respondents had been here since at least 2008 or before;

So who needs to change or integrate? British (often expressed as English) society or those who migrate to our shores?