Polish Identity in Rural England.

Submitted by Kirstie Louise Bowden, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography, September 2012.

This dissertation is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

SIGNED:.............................................. DATE:..................................
ABSTRACT

With Polish accession to the European Union in 2004 came an unprecedented wave of Polish migration to England. Marking it apart from previous waves of migration which settled in urban areas, this wave settled across the settlement hierarchy, resultantly described as geographically “ubiquitous” by Bauere et al (2007). This thesis takes as its inspiration a triad of influences; this migration wave; what the author deems seminal texts in rural geography (Philo 1992, Askins 2009, Panelli et al 2009); and personal circumstance (living in a rural area receiving Polish migrants for the first time) to chart that postulated as a lacuna (Burrell 2009); a study of the ways in which post-accession Polish identity is played out in rural areas. Wanting to focus on life in rural England as a whole rather than one specific strand, this thesis is by necessity broad, incorporating a number of strands of enquiry; the media migrant worker moral panic, community relations, Polish focussed service responses to Polish migration, and schemes delivered to the rural host population which aim to improve their encounters with migrant populations. What binds these themes together is the notion of hospitality, considering whether it is being extended or withheld, the reasons upon which such acts are predicated and the outcome upon those involved.

The thesis concludes that this grand wave of migration has rendered rural areas a thirddspace of possibility in both a physical (via service imprinting on the landscape) and social (via the forging of transnational friendships and in some instances, both Polish and migrant, hybridised identities) sense. It is postulated that the psychogeographies upon which relations are predicated – of which there are many, subtly nuanced and dependent upon the experiences of the individual - are in a state of flux and subject to revision with the passing of time, as are processes of hospitality extension (or indeed withholding). It is my belief that in detailing moments of hopeful engagement alongside moments of deep despair and reflecting upon their impacts upon identity, this thesis has heeded Askins (2005:53) call to embrace transrurality – a conceptualisation “that both encapsulates the specificities of place and is open to mobility and desire in order to displace rural England as only an exclusionary white space” and reposition it within transitional social imaginaries.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the University of Exeter and ESRC for their funding of this project and to my supervisors Professor Paul Cloke and Professor Jo Little for their much valued help and guidance. Thank you to my participants for giving their time so freely and fully. Thanks also to my car ‘Eamo’ and First Great Western for always getting me ‘there and back’ in time (loosely speaking with regards to the latter).

This process has been long and arduous and I offer special thanks to all that kept me going; my beloved Exeter City F.C. (2011/2012 squad NOT included) for giving me something else to stress about, my football family (especially Marge for singing to Rohan Ricketts in the car park at Tranmere), Eamonn Dolan for being my hero and reminding me to always “keep the faith”, my four-legged (and indeed two-legged) friends at Town Barton Farm, and last but by no means least, my family without whom I would never have reached this point. I offer particular thanks to my Mum for her love, encouragement, ‘sayings’ and for simply putting up with me and my often miserable demeanour!

Thank you to my Geography teachers at Queen Elizabeth’s Community College, particularly Martin Wilmott who was quite simply the best teacher I ever had. He inspired and nurtured my love of Geography and much of my reaching this point is down to him.

I dedicate this thesis to the friends and heroes who passed away over the course of this process; Colin, Kelly, Adam, Dom and Colonel. Much loved, much missed, always remembered. Rest in peace.
# CONTENTS

Preface 12

Chapter 1 – Poles Apart: Situating the Post-Accession Wave of Polish Migration 22

1.1 Introduction 22

1.2 Rurality and Ethnicity 22

1.2.1 The Traditional Focus – Black and Ethnic Minority Groups 22

1.2.2 The Post-Millennial Focus – Minority White Groups 26

1.3 The Accession of Poland to the European Union 30

1.3.1 Migration Waves– The Constitutive Cohorts of the UK Polish Population 30

1.3.2 Quantifying Post-Accession Migration 33

1.3.3 The Geographical Distribution of Post-Accession Polish Migrants 34

1.3.4 The Demographic Profile of Post-Accession Polish Migrants 35

1.3.5 Employment Trends 37

1.4 Research Aim and Research Questions 40

1.5 Conclusion 41

Chapter 2 – The ‘Polish Migrant’: Theorising Encounter 43

2.1 Introduction 43

2.2 Hospitality 44

2.2.1 Hospitality: A Governmental Framework 44

2.2.2 Defining Hospitable Relations 49
2.3 Theorising Negative Responses to Polish Migrants by Indigenous Residents

2.3.1 Psychoanalysis, ‘Others’ and Boundaries

2.3.2 Theorising Contestation: Zizek, the ‘thing’ and the ‘fantasy of racism’

2.4 Progressive Rural Relations?

2.5 Deconstructing Polish Responses to Polish Migrants

2.5.1 Inter-Cohort Contestation

2.5.2 Intra-Cohort Contestation

2.5.3 Normalised Polish Positioning?

2.6 Conclusion

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Epistemological Foundations

3.3 Research Methods

3.3.1 Interview

3.3.2 Ethnography

3.3.3 Discourse Analysis

3.3.3.1 Migrant Worker Myth Buster Leaflet

3.3.3.2 Mass Media

3.4 Research Design

3.4.1 Pilot Study

3.4.2 Participant Recruitment

3.4.3 Qualitative Sampling
3.4.4 Data Analysis

3.5 Situating Myself within the Project
   3.5.1 Me: White ‘Other’
   3.5.2 Fear of Research as Exploitation for Personal Gain
   3.5.3 Problems of Disclosure

3.6 Conclusion

Chapter 4 – Communities of Difference (1) Attitudes and Encounters

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Positive Attitudes and Encounters
   4.2.1 Positive Attitudes towards People
      4.2.1.1 English Attitudes towards Polish migrants
      4.2.1.2 Polish Attitudes towards English residents
   4.2.2 Positive Attitudes towards Rural Place
      4.2.2.1 English Attitudes Regarding the Impact of Polish Migration
      4.2.2.2 Polish Attitudes Regarding their Experience of Place
   4.2.3 Identity Hybridisation
      4.2.3.1 Separation
      4.2.3.2 Collaboration
      4.2.3.3 Renouncement

4.3 Negative Attitudes and Encounters
   4.3.1 Negative Attitudes towards People
      4.3.1.1 English Attitudes towards Polish Migrants
4.3.1.2 Post-War Polish Migrant Attitudes towards Post-Accession

Polish Migrants 133

4.3.1.3 Polish Attitudes towards English Residents 136

4.3.2 Negative Attitudes towards Rural Place 145

4.3.2.1 English Attitudes Regarding the Impact of Polish Migration upon Place 145

4.3.2.2 Polish Attitudes Regarding their Experience of Rural Place 154

4.4 Indifference 159

4.5 Conclusion 160

Chapter 5: Communities of Difference (2) Responsive Polish Focussed Services 164

5.1 Introduction 164

5.2 Statutory Responses 165

5.3 Voluntary/Third Sector Responses 175

5.4 Entrepreneurism 183

5.5 Response Spaces as ‘Thirdspace’ 189

5.5.1 Positive Responses to Thirdspace 192

5.5.2 Negative Responses to Thirdspace 194

5.6 Conclusion 197
Chapter 6: Communities of Difference (3) Improving Host Population Attitudes via the Migrant Worker Myth Buster Leaflet

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Media responses to Polish migration: The renewed age of the moral panic?
   6.2.1 Introduction
   6.2.2 Theme 1 - ‘British workers for British jobs’
   6.2.3 Theme 2 – Negative Discourses about Polish Migrants
   6.2.4 Theme 3 – Negative Discourses Enacted Against Polish Migrants
   6.2.5 Theme 4 - Return Migration
   6.2.6 Reflections

6.3 Migrant Worker Myth Buster Leaflet
   6.3.1 Introduction
   6.3.2 The Migrant Worker Myth Buster Leaflet
   6.3.3 Migrant Worker Myth Buster Leaflet as Psychogeography?
   6.3.4 Staged Motive?

6.4 Conclusion

Chapter 7: Communities of Difference (3) Improving Host Population Attitudes via the “I packed this myself” Participatory Art Project

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Aesthetic Introductions

7.3 ‘I packed this myself”: Motives and Mechanisms
   7.3.1 Postsecular Partnership
   7.3.2 Children and Citizenship Education
7.4 Engaging With the Participatory Art Project 252
7.5 Evaluating “I packed this myself” 256
7.6 Conclusion 260
7.7 Reflections upon the ‘Improving Host Population Attitudes’ chapters 262

Chapter 8 – Conclusions 267

8.1 Key Findings 267
8.2 Methodological Reflections 269
8.3 Key Thematic Areas 272
8.3.1 The Thirspace of Rural Communities 272
8.3.2 Psychogeographies and Boundaries 275
8.3.3 Cultivating Hospitality 280
8.4 Future Research 282
8.5 Conclusion 284

Appendix – List of formal interviewees 288

Bibliography 297
# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND TABLES

| Table 2.1 | South West Migrant Worker Action Plan 2010-2012: Priorities | 46 |
| Table 3.1 | Research methods | 74 |
| Table 3.2 | The breakdown of interviews by research area | 82 |
| Table 3.3 | Ethnography case studies | 85 |
| Table 3.4 | Pilot study evaluation of research methods | 91 |
| Figure 4.1 | Piotr’s pictorial representation of Fordstone and its inhabitants | 139 |
| Figure 4.2 | Anti-Polish graffiti in Tidbury | 146 |
| Figure 4.3 | Tom’s Facebook group | 150 |
| Figure 5.1 | Devon EAL and Polish EMAS referral numbers by academic year | 168 |
| Figure 5.2 | Map of Tidbury detailing ‘The Polish Quarter’ | 185 |
| Figure 5.3 | The Polish ‘section’ | 186 |
| Figure 5.4 | Courting encounter on street shop signage | 188 |
| Figure 6.1 | The Daily Star campaign poster | 206 |
| Figure 6.2 | ‘Swan Bake’ | 209 |
| Figure 6.3 | Luton Angling Club’s “the swans are not for eating” sign | 210 |
| Figure 6.4 | Anti-Polish actions media reporting | 214 |
| Figure 6.5 | Reporting return migration | 216 |
| Figure 6.6 | Migrant worker myth buster leaflet (Eden LSP) | 224 |
| Figure 6.7 | Myth presentation (Coventry) | 227 |
| Figure 6.8 | Question posing (Arun) | 228 |
| Figure 7.1 | Map boxes | 254 |
| Figure 7.2 | Migrant facts | 254 |
Figure 7.3  Maisie’s painting  255