



Two cases of labour migrants in Denmark on 'orderly' conditions – a success story?

Conference 'Labour Migration in the Nordic-Baltic Region. New Trends of Labour Migration – Ready for the Changes?'

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Agenda

Introduction: Overall political and economic transformations and the labour market

Creating 'orderly working conditions': Polish labour migrants in Denmark

Understanding migrant work(ers) through family relations



Labour migration in the 21th century – a new world order?

EU's liberal dimension in (more) full bloom

- the Inner Market (Maastricht 1993)
- the Four Freedoms (following Maastricht)
- WTO (1995)

EU enlargement (2004)

Probable underlying condition: End of the Cold War

→ SEVERILY WEAKENED LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS



Liberalization within the construction industry

Requirement of public licitations

Foreign subcontractors with foreign workers

Migration of individual workers





**Open borders and
weak labour
organizations**



**national identity
can play a
constituent role in
wage labourers'
providing for their
life conditions**



Project design

A multi-sitet research project:

- fieldwork in both Denmark and Poland
- in work-places (construction sites) and in homes

A heterogeneous ethnographic material:

- Interviews and observations among representatives of labour unions (in DK and in Poland), employers, employees, family members, EU-parliamentary members, migration researchers (in DK and in Poland).

Project conducted jointly with Ass. Prof. Marie Sandberg, Copenhagen







... the Danish model in this particular case in point...

The Poles work on 'orderly conditions' – terms are settled by the local trade union branch

Yet:

They work on a dissimilar hour schedule

They receive a lower payment

They stand out as a demarcated group

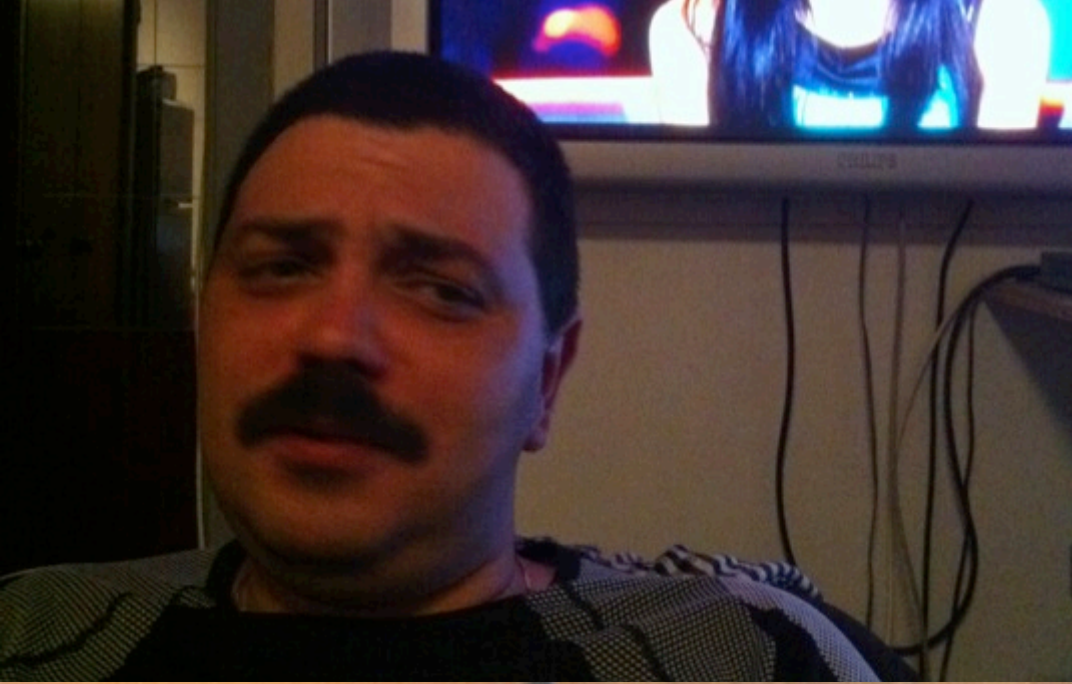


The new situation is not that working tasks are clearly defined and limited at the workplace

The new situation is that 'Polishness' rather than professional skills becomes a way to delimit and define working tasks at the workplace













Danish conditions with 'Polish' particularities – a succes?

That depends on:

Ability to adjust to changed circumstances (such as overall wage level and level of living costs)

Settlement pattern – the role of the family – crucial



