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*Adaptation of the CEEMR website – modernisation and update of the content – for application for indexation in international publications databases, in particular Scopus and DOAJ, as well as proofreading of articles in English are financed from the funds of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education allocated for the dissemination of science under the agreement 765/P-DUN/2016.*

ISSN 2300–1682

Editorial office: Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw, Banacha 2b, 02–097 Warsaw, e-mail: ceemr@uw.edu.pl

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# Mapping Social Remittances and ‘Segmented Development’ in Central and Eastern Europe

## Introduction

Migratory remittances are inseparable components of development. At the same time, both these concepts are contested, with less than clear contours (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2009); development in particular is based predominately on ‘an assumption that something is moving from a lower, less differentiated status to a higher, better and more differentiated one’ (Hammar and Tamas 1997: 18). This includes the belief that some societies are the least, some less, and some the most developed or advanced (Hammar and Tamas 1997). In this sense, migration plays a key role as one of the symptoms of development.

Development is very often put in a nexus with migration, economic development and remittances, which are sometimes framed as the key ‘glues’ of this chain. Remittances are even sometimes termed the ‘new development mantra’ (Kapur 2010), although this places in question their impact on sending countries where there is no infrastructure (both technical and human capital) to receive them in the medium and longer terms (de Haas 2005).

The issue, however, is that the ‘migration–development nexus’ with remittances as one of the key components is associated with migration within regions of unequal economic performance, most often from the ‘poor South’ to the ‘wealthy North’. The studies on all kinds of remittances mostly focus on migration flows from Latin America and the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa and Western Asia to North America, Western Europe and Australia and Oceania. The whole area of Central and Eastern Europe after the dismantling of the Soviet Union seems not to be included in these discourses. Why? Is it due to the lack of clear differences in developmental measures, or standardised economic criteria, such as the Human Development Index (HDI): GDP *per capita*, life expectancy at birth and educational achievement? Or because the discourse on the migration–development nexus has covered only countries with diverse economic performance (Grabowska and Garapich 2016)? What about countries which are in the same migration system, such as the European Union (EU), but display more qualitative, social and cultural differences other than the HDI?

Social aspects of development were observed and analysed by Peggy Levitt (1998 and later), who coined the term *social remittances* to describe all non-financial migratory social and cultural aspects which are transferred and circulated in migratory transnational social spaces (Faist 2000). She categorised them into values, norms, practices, skills and social capital, and we use this conceptual toolkit here to observe developmental issues within the enlarged EU. The aim of this special issue is to discuss the social and cultural aspects of the migration–development nexus in the new context of the enlarged EU, and therefore post-communist countries. Is, however, the term ‘migration–development nexus’ suitable for the part of the world covering Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and its post-communist remnants?

### **‘Segmented development’ in post-communist countries**

But first, let us ask a fundamental question: is ‘migration–development nexus’ an appropriate concept to describe what has been happening for the last thirty years in CEE, where some countries also acceded to the EU in the two enlargement rounds of 2004 and 2007? Is there any paradigmatic alternative to this term to discuss the role of migration and remittances in this region of the world?

Although the migration–development nexus framework is adopted by some scholars writing about South-Eastern Europe (e.g. Careja 2013; Miluka, Carletto, Davis and Zezza 2010 for Albania; Rotilă 2008 for Romania), in many respects linking migration and development seems, according to Anne White (in this volume), an inappropriate conceptual framework for understanding the impact of migration on most CEE countries (see, however, Thaut 2009 on Lithuania). This is because both Western and most Central and East European countries have high or very high Human Development Indexes (HDI), so CEE as a region can hardly be conceptualised as improving in terms of ‘development’ from migration. Individuals of course may find their opportunities for self-fulfilment – ‘development as freedom’ (Sen 1999) – much improved as a result of migration.

However, in many instances ‘development’ may be used through a lack of alternatives and as a ‘black box’, more connected to a ‘change’ as a less value-loaded concept (Hammar and Tamas 1997). But still the links between migration and development-generated change in the enlarged EU are of great significance in this special issue.

Starting from a broad understanding of development, connected also to a part of the world omitted in earlier discourse, Central and Eastern Europe, we avoid here a narrow definition constructed for the purposes of relations between countries with huge discrepancies in HDIs. We agree with Hammar and Tamas (1997) that development should be considered as a multidirectional, dynamic process with a ‘broader cluster of non-quantifiable social and political dimensions’ (1997: 19).

*As development takes place in time and space, the difference over time and the speed of change registered for a country is often more significant than the static level or point of departure from which the change originates. A low but growing GDP or HDI may thus be assumed to affect migration differently than stagnant levels (Hammar and Tamas 1997: 19).*

In this context it is important to stress that the debate on the role migration plays in system transformation has been framed in CEE countries as ‘migration and modernisation’ discourse (e.g. Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008; Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski 2009; Okólski 2012 for Poland; Sandu 2010 for Romania), where different aspects were raised from in the global development discourse but asking the same research question: what is the role of migration in development/modernisation of sending countries? While global developmentalists focused mainly on all kinds of remittances, scholars from CEE countries put forward the argument of the ‘migration hump’ (Martin 1993; Martin and Taylor 1996) (and ‘crowding out effect’ (cf. Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008), which in short means that especially post-accession migration has helped to diminish local labour market pressures of the surpluses of labour which have been growing dramatically as a result of transformation of the post-communist labour market, combined with the accession of the increasingly educated generation of baby-boomers of the 1980s into the Polish labour market. But again the modernisation discourse focused on ‘the standardised measures’, relating mostly to the demographic and economic conditions mentioned earlier. The danger of transition and modernisation theories is to think that ‘development and demographic change automatically leads to certain migration outcomes or that transitions are inevitable or irreversible’ (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2009: 49).

Another strand of theory substituting development with other developmental discourse lines crucial here is the debate on ‘convergence/divergence issues’ between less developed/underperformed and most developed/well-performing countries, particularly highlighted in the context of the Republic of Ireland in the 1990s (Krugman 1997; Barry 2000), where migration processes played a significant, if not vital role. An underdeveloped line of argument here relating to the social and cultural aspects of development/modernisation/convergence in CEE is the context of EU enlargement, where specific processes simply accelerated as a result of developmental opportunities. But one should consider two areas of research: (1) post-communist countries which were in the past mainly satellite countries of the Soviet Union and joined the EU in the two rounds in 2004 and 2007, and (2) Eastern European countries which remain outside the EU and used to be member states of the Soviet Union. In this special issue, we focus more on the first group, although there are some literature elaborations on the latter group too (economic aspects, e.g. Kureková 2011; social and cultural aspects, e.g. Vlase 2013 for Ukraine; Bobova, in this volume, for Belarus).

Certain CEE countries, such as Poland, the Baltic states, Lithuania and Romania, joined the EU in May 2004, and their migratory outflows accelerated as a result. Some scholars say that joining the EU completed the system transformation, and since May 2004 we have been talking about a different stage of development. As we agreed in this introduction that development is not a process which includes stages and levels but is a multidirectional, dynamic process penetrating different spheres of life, the accession to the EU has opened up new avenues for analysis. There are still arguments for not totally putting aside the developmental perspectives to understand the changes which EU post-communist societies are undergoing. In that sense, we call not for dropping this point of view altogether, but rather for a more nuanced, fine-grained and context-dependent analysis taking into account not just the differences between countries, but diverse path development and takes on modernisation *within* them.

The first argument still relates to economic development. As scholars have noted (Hammar, Brochmann, Tamas and Faist 1997; Castles, de Haas and Miller 2009), the most effective development processes happen between high-income and medium-income societies where there is still some space for improvement and some infrastructure to absorb all kinds of developmental remittances. De Haas (2005), for example, points out that the positive ‘remittances euphoria’ is questionable due to the lack of ‘local infrastructure’ preventing the migration potential from being fully realised. The same message is given by Castles (2016; Oxford keynote), that migration alone cannot support development. The improvements, such as reduction of corruption and investment-friendly climate, need to be implemented beforehand. Several reviews of rich empirical material, both qualitative and quantitative (e.g. Papademetriou and Martin 1991; Taylor, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Massey and Pellegrino 1996; Ozden and Schiff 2005; Agunias 2006; Katseli, Lucas and Xenogiani 2006; de Haas 2007; UNDP 2009) show that despite some positive impacts of migration, migration itself cannot remove general structural development constraints. Therefore social remittance-induced changes are not always positive. What is remitted can be both enabling pro-social and anti-social behaviours such as different attitudes towards diversity or being more or less prejudiced (pending on one’s experience abroad) (Grabowska, Garapich, Jaźwińska and Radziwinowiczówna 2016). Therefore social remittances should be discussed in a more nuanced, non-obvious, non-bipolar ‘positive–negative’ way. This is because the notion of change is also not that clear. Especially as resistance towards social remittances could become the first best strategy at both individual and collective levels (Garapich 2016; Grabowska *et al.* 2016). The call for more nuanced approach to social remittances is also connected to uneven distribution of migratory costs and rewards across families and communities, as well as to informal and legal activities brought by and as a result of migration (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2013). There is also the very important factor of time to consider. Once transferred, social remittances and their individual and societal outcomes do not need to last forever. There is, as identified by Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2013), an ossification effect, which means that migrants might romanticise and

as a result freeze the developmental opportunities of sending locations, which are a ‘bastion of traditional values and culture’ (Levitt 2007), or once brought, social remittances have unclear unintended social consequences (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2013).

This special issue aims at bridging these gaps in conceptual awareness by connecting the developmental and transformation paradigms – we term this approach as a form of ‘segmented development’. In our understanding, segmented development means that in some parts of society the social transformation is completed, such as public infrastructure (roads, public buildings, local airports, aqua parks and other sport facilities), but other segments usually connected to social and cultural aspects of human capital lag behind and do not allow for the migration-generated change to take root and embed itself more deeply.

Reich, Gordon, and Edwards (1973) developed the concept of ‘segmentation’ to describe how different rules of operation within a company governed different ‘cells’ (a segment of a grouping). These segments would have different characteristics. These descriptions might also apply to a society which is composed of different segments/cells governed by different rules and stimulations, which therefore develop and transform them unevenly. In this special issue we claim that some segments of CEE societies are governed and stimulated through the system transformation, and as a result of the EU accession are in a better position than the others, hence there is still some room for migratory impacts. It is claimed here that modernisation through European funds (mostly infrastructural) and cultural diffusion through global media are not enough to impact on the development of human capital. In this space, there is a clear need for recognition of the human factor needed to accelerate social change, also connected to migration processes. The aim here, however, is not to distil the role of migration from other developmental factors but to show its complementary function. This might be especially visible in specific spatial contexts which involve ‘spatial contingency’ (Samers 2010: 131) but also ‘social contingency’. It might involve all kinds of spaces such as a city, a neighbourhood, an NGO, a workplace, a school, a café, but also in a social sense a family, a peer-group, a faith community, a hobby community, etc.

In this context, some scholars point to the issue of the mismatch between funding-generated structural change and the slower one that takes place in people’s minds, noting that Central Europeans soon became used to ‘good roads and local airports’ but forgot about values, norms and practices, especially connected to civic society and social trust, which in the Polish case seems to be rather low (Sztompka 1993). Described as ‘soft modernisation’, that is social and cultural modernisation (Makowski 2016), it is the outcome of the interplay of exogenous and indigenous factors, and it is clear that migration-generated processes, social remittances included, seems to be the space for bringing at least some of the lacking aspects of soft modernisation where some segments of society need further developments. In the case of Central and Eastern European societies, it relates to human capital and social capital connected predominantly to civic society and understanding for social diversity, but also to gender roles and general family life. Migrants can and do act as insider–outsider agents (‘mid-siders’), addressing best the local dynamics of development. And it is through social remittances, and careful sociological analysis of their range, impact, receptivity, resistance and ossification and the general processes of remitting, that we may examine the process of change on a micro as well as macro scale (Grabowska *et al.* 2016). In this special issue we therefore aim to bring together various perspectives and empirical case studies that offer a more nuanced and context-dependent view of these processes. This covers numerous social segments and spaces of human interaction where we witness sometimes contradictory development: workplaces, (trans)local communities, family and home, and well-being.

## **Workplaces**

In looking at various social spaces or segments, we begin with Mateusz Karolak's examination of individual social remittances in the sphere of employment, against the background of the changing employment patterns and increased flexibility of work arrangements. Through an analysis of the life stories of post-accession return migrants from the UK to Poland, it investigates the ways in which returnees' work experience gained abroad impacts on their perception of employment standards in general. The differences revealed are understood as 'potential social remittances', i.e. the discrepancies acknowledged by returnees between the realities experienced during emigration and after their return (in this case to Poland). The author argues that the realisation of 'potential social remittances' depends on return migrants' coping strategies as well as on the institutional and structural settings in the returnees' home country. The four main distinguished strategies are: re-emigration, activism, adaptation and entrepreneurship.

Looking at the similar social context of work, Mike Haynes and Aleksandra Galasińska explore the workplace experience of migrants and argue that attention to work as an element of the migrant experience needs to go beyond pure economic and occupational gains. The complexities of both the range of migrants' ideas about their work and the analysis of internet-based newspaper comment sites as a form of public communication are the key focus of the paper, demonstrating how the workplace acts as a social and cultural exchange space, in consequence generating change.

## **Migration (sub-)cultures**

Another range of articles in this issue discusses social remittances in a more reflective manner, as ways with which migrants absorb and understand change they have experienced. Anne White, for instance, in her paper discusses the research of the impact of migration on social change in sending countries, and the need to pay greater attention to the lives of 'stayers'. A comprehensive approach to the impact of migration in her view begins by using mainstream sociological research to identify overall social trends in the origin country, before considering migration as one determinant of change. White writes that social remittances are understood to include not just foreign ideas, but also those resulting from migrants' reflections on their own changing lives. One way to investigate how such social remittances 'scale up' to create cultural change is to consider the meso-level of regional migration culture. Taking the example of changing gender roles, she discusses Polish sociological and migration scholarship before presenting her own quantitative and qualitative data on stayers' opinions about maternal migration. She shows how stayers in regions with high levels of migration can become persuaded to condone maternal behaviour which is at odds with traditional views on gender roles and the importance of the extended family.

In a similar tradition, Dumitru Sandu considers remittances as part of the life worlds of immigrants in multiple interactions with return intentions and communication with those left behind. This is an alternative view to the standard approach to remittances as a possible source of development or as a variable to be explained by family solidarity, investment projects or the reasons for return. The key dependent variable is the home orientation of immigrants as a function of remittances, return intentions and communication behaviours, measured in quantitative and typological terms. This typological analysis of home orientation diverges from the standard approach, which is in terms of high or low intensity of cross-border activities of remitting or communicating between immigrants and those they have left behind. It argues for the fact that cross-border activities combine in different ways to generate specific social types of remitting practices. The remitting behaviours of migrants are, in this approach, multidimensional, encompassing economic, social and cultural content.



Looking at norms and values from the perspective of social remittances, Izabela Grabowska and Godfried Engbersen explore the unintended consequences of temporary migration from Poland by combining Merton's functional analysis with Levitt's work on social remittances. As they argue, in addition to economic remittances, Polish migrants have been bringing norms, values, practices and social capital to their communities of origin since the end of the nineteenth century, hence in fact there is nothing radically new here. The article presents a juxtaposition of the non-material effects of earlier migration from Poland, dating from the turn of the twentieth century, with those of the contemporary era of migration from Poland since the 1990s. The analysis shows that some aspects, such as negotiating gender roles, the changing division of household labour, individualistic lifestyles, new skills and sources of social capital and changing economic rationalities, are constantly being transferred by migrants from destination to origin communities. Contemporary digital tools facilitate these transfers and contribute to changing norms and practices in Polish society. The article demonstrates that migration fulfils specific functions for particular sections of Polish society by replacing some functions of the communist state (e.g. cash assistance and loans from communist factories, factory and post-coop cultures) and by facilitating their adaptation to changing conditions (e.g. changing gender relations, new models of family, job aspirations and social mobility).

### **Receptivity and resistance**

One of the key questions on the mechanisms of remitting and the role individual decisions play in the process is *why* certain ideas, norms and practices are remitted, and *why* some take root in places of origins and others less so, or are overtly rejected. The theme of receptivity of social remittances is taken up by Nadya Bobova, who investigates the post-return experiences of highly skilled Belarusian professionals. She concentrates on the socio-cultural aspects of highly skilled migration and views returnees as carriers of new experiences, ideas, and practices by studying the ways in which they apply various socio-cultural remittances to the different spheres of their lives. In particular, she argues that the formation and transmission of socio-cultural remittances are strongly heterogeneous and selective processes, which manifest themselves to varying degrees not only in different people, but also in different aspects of people's lives. The analysis of several socio-cultural remittances in private and public spheres shows that in some cases the socio-cultural remittances display strong gender differences.

On the other hand, Laima Nevinskaitė deals with the issue of home-country receptivity towards social remittances from the professional diaspora. In her view, social remittances from the highly skilled depend on a favourable context for knowledge and skills transfer in their home countries, a context that could be summarised by the term 'country receptivity'. Her analysis reveals several groups of obstacles to successful knowledge and skills transfer that may be understood as issues of country receptivity: mistrust of government by diaspora members, expressed as a belief that it is not interested in results and thus involvement of the diaspora, but rather in pursuing particular political objectives; lack of openness towards other experiences (unwillingness of institutions at different levels and in various fields to open up to new opinions, approaches and experiences brought by Lithuanians from abroad); bureaucratic and institutional impediments (inability of institutions to adapt their procedures in the interests of cooperation; slowness and ineffectiveness when dealing with requests or reacting to initiatives from the diaspora); and a perceived negative opinion (unwelcoming attitude) in society towards Lithuanians from abroad.

At the other end of the receptivity scale, we encounter resistance; whether active or passive in some instances, this plays a fundamental role in social change generated by migration. Michał P. Garapich deals with resistance as ways with which migrants perform and articulate their culturally dependent attitude towards po-

tential change influenced by social remittances and the generalised process of diffusion. He offers some insights into the anthropology of resistance towards small, mundane aspects of human behaviour, which is the subject of conversations by both migrants and non-migrants in small-town Poland.

In similar spirit, Mariusz Dziegłowski in his article focusing on the situation of returnees, looks at the extent social change is possible in the context of various structural and cultural constraints. He argues that we need to look specifically at ways society opens up to possibilities of change due to norms and practices brought from abroad. Dziegłowski reminds us of the ideas embodied in the notion of Schütz's 'homecomer' bringing forward the paradoxes of migrants' re-adjustment connected to psychological difficulties in dealing with everyday situations back home such as perceived differences in mentality, or behavioural patterns and in the case of Poland, the outcome of these paradoxes is unfavourable for social change to occur. His analysis is a reminder of multilayered nature of social remittances and their diverse impacts on sending society.

The articles in this collection provide new ways of thinking and reflecting on how migration, development and social change intersect through a multitude of layers of structural and individual forces. As we began with macro-scale debates on the theoretical and empirical problems with the notion of development, we try to provide, from the viewpoint of segmented development, ways with which empirical studies can be understood and made meaningful. The multitude of diverse contexts we put forward defy our epistemological attempts to create a one-size-fits-all theoretical perspective with which to understand societies and the rapid scale of changes they undergo. In fact, this seems to be one of the attractive aspects of the concept of migration-driven social remittances – as it describes connections, diffusions, bridging and mutual influences across human societies. It has the same ability to reconsider and refine our own conceptual toolboxes with which to understand these processes.

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# Instead of Preface: Reflexive Interview with Professor Peggy Levitt

## Social Remittances and More: Reflections on 25 Years of Migration Studies

**Izabela Grabowska:** This special issue on social remittances in Central and Eastern Europe is a follow-up to our conference which took place in January 2015 in Warsaw. We would like to interview you, which would be a kind of new way of expressing some reflections on social remittances instead of a conventional preface to this special issue. The first question is very general; you have probably been asked this many times, but perhaps you've developed new reflections on the subject with the passage of time. How do you interpret social remittances today, 18 years after you first coined this concept?

**Peggy Levitt:** First of all, I am delighted that this concept seems to have become part of many conversations in the migration studies community and that people have taken what was a very general idea and helped to polish it, hone it, clarify it. Certainly, the original formulation which was too much about things travelling from a receiving country back to a sending country, and which seemed to overemphasise the positive, has been corrected. Now we understand that these are circulating ideas, values and practices. What people are exposed to is very much influenced by what people bring with them when they move which, in turn, influences what they actually send back home. This gives rise to a constant iterative circulation. What is also very exciting is how people have taken this idea and looked at it in very specific places and at specific types of remittances, so religious remittances, political remittances, and have really analysed the costs and benefits of these kinds of exchanges: who they reach, who they privilege, who they don't, who are some of the new losers and winners as a result.

**But do you see it as a kind of umbrella concept that also covers political, religious and other remittances? At a seminar I attended at Nuffield College, Oxford in September 2016, there was a project looking at the combination of political and social remittances, mainly in connection with Ukraine and other post-communist countries, and we were wondering how you see these. Should we separate them into political remittances, religious remittances and cultural remittances with specific dividing lines? Should social remittances be a kind of umbrella term? What do you think of that?**

Well, I think that is actually happening now in the field. People are looking at social remittances in specific sectors. So my only hesitation about saying yes, social remittances is the mega category is: what then happens to the actual ‘social’? Political is kind of clear, and religious is kind of clear, but what do you do with the socio-cultural category? There is a lot of overlap between these different categories and these different kinds of remittances and I would not want to get into unproductive definitional battles. So, for example, where would work fall that looks at the social work being done and the social meanings being expressed by economic remittance exchanges? The act of sending remittances is often about demonstrating power or success. So every economic act has a social function and the same is true with politics and religion and I would not want that to get lost.

**How did the principle of social remittances occur to you? Was there a specific moment of inspiration in any of your fieldwork, a specific sentence that an interviewee came up with? Sometimes the momentum for a discovery in the social world comes from a particular situation.**

Peggy Levitt: You know, I was doing that fieldwork in the early 1990s, over 20 years ago, and at that point economic remittances were the name of the game and everybody was paying attention to monetary flows and their potential role in bringing about development. In fact a dear colleague of mine at MIT was behind that, she started doing that work in the Gulf and looking at what became known as the migration–development nexus. I thought: this is just about money. When I was doing my fieldwork for *The Transnational Villagers* it was so clear to me that people in the Dominican Republic were behaving and thinking in ways that were influenced by migration. Just consider the creation and exchange of social capital. What a family member did in Boston would increase the status of his family members in the Dominican Republic. It was just so clear to me that there was a whole other piece of the discussion that needed to be brought to the fore. Another thing that struck me. The Dominican Republic is very hot. In the summer, it’s 110 degrees Fahrenheit and in wintertime 80, which is still hot. But as soon as it went below 90, all the young women were putting on long sleeves, sweaters, and wearing boots, winter boots like you and I wear in winter. This was because their sisters had brought the stuff home and this was the latest fashion in Boston. There was social meaning attached to putting on these kinds of things. This is really interesting. And many of these young women changed their minds about whom they wanted to marry: they didn’t want to marry someone who hadn’t migrated because the men who had migrated had supposedly become more progressive about gender. And they changed their ideas about race. Many of the people in this village thought of themselves as white before they migrated. It had been settled by people from the Canary Islands who did not marry out. But when they got to the US, they were automatically people of colour, so this changed racial categories as well. So, I realised that gender was being produced across borders, as well as race and class, and it wasn’t just a question of economic, it was a question of these socio-cultural flows.

**There is no one single way of remitting social remittances. Everyone behaves differently. How do you explain this?**

That’s a hard question to answer because it is a very general and it is about purposeful action *versus* what just happens because of a conversation you have or things that you say. When Leonel Fernández was president of the Dominican Republic and he had campaign ads where he was shown playing basketball in some basketball court in Washington Heights in New York City and he was saying I spent part of my childhood in New York, which was true, he wasn’t directly saying ‘I’m telling people that American politics is good and we should emulate some of the things about American democracy’. But through his message, actions, he was sending social remittances and sort of modelling a different way of doing politics as he campaigned. So you have very

powerful people sending social remittances. I guess I would say that. Social remittances exchanges are between people who can say where they acquired a new value or practice. But there is the cultural and discursive backdrop that makes those exchanges possible by making people more open to these new ideas and behaviours. So Leonel Fernández is not talking to me or you or his mother for example. But he is setting the backdrop, setting the stage for when somebody who lives in New York says ‘look, we have a new Congressman and he is from the Dominican Republic, and he is doing x, y and z and why couldn’t we do those kinds of things in the Dominican Republic’. Then somebody is receptive to these changes. The question is not so much who is saying that, but who is listening and why they’re listening. That’s power dynamics, that’s about influential people, that’s about what makes somebody a change agent and what makes somebody an adaptor, both people who are from the sending country and from the receiving country and vice versa.

**You’ve looked at social remittances as part of the migration–development nexus, which assumes that social remittances travel from developed to non-developed or less developed countries. In the European Union social remittances have also been shown to travel between old and new member states – between developed countries, equal migration system, in terms of classical human development indices. But we know that the post-communist past is part of this. How would you explain it?**

I think that that is one of the important theoretical advances that other scholars are making with their work, including yours. So, absolutely. Social remittances circulate within the global south, they circulate between developed countries. The circulation does not arise from developed to under-developed. It arises from migrants. Any place where migrants go and they are exposed to new things, they are probably going to tell non-migrants about it. And then we can talk about the relative differences between countries. Certainly when we talk about Poland and England there is a certain kind of difference. When we are talking about France and Algeria, there is a certain kind of relationship. That is another field of inquiry. Do social remittances travel differently depending on the relative status of relations between the two countries that constitute the field where this circulation is taking place?

**Then there’s the migration–development nexus. Does it aid or distort understanding when social remittances are debated within this framework? How valid does the development mantra remain for discussing social remittances in other contexts – as you said, not necessarily in relation to development?**

Well, we know development is a really heated word, with lots of baggage which means different things to different people. Do we want to talk about what happens to Polish politics when people go to England as development, or do we want to talk about it as political change, which can be both positive and negative? We can’t assume that everything that people get exposed to in England is positive. They could also be seeing very difficult race and ethnic relations in England, they could be experiencing lots of discrimination. Then they come back to Poland and they may act this out by finding an underdog group they want to feel superior to. I don’t think about discussions about social remittance circulation in the global north as part of that migration–development nexus. I think it is another category of discussion, again due to the relative political and economic position of each nation. In other words, how does social remittance circulation change when you are moving from a country with X GDP to X GDP, or from a democratic country to a formerly non-democratic country? All those things are important questions to ask. So, for example, after I wrote about Dominicans, in my next book, I wrote about Brazilians. I assumed that they would be as involved in homeland politics as Dominicans had been but they were not. Part of it was because many people had left when Brazil was still an authoritarian government and they had not had a tradition of democratic participation. They did not have a strong sense of



supporting a political party so there were few political party chapters that formed in the US. That is the kind of thing where you say: what is the transnational social field I'm talking about? What are the implications of this field for social remittance transfers?

**But if we think about this idea of development in a wider sense, not relating directly to GDP, but involving social change connected to various segments or sectors of society. We could say that development is also not uniform, so in a sense, there is segmented development in the post-communist space. What do you think of that idea? In a black-and-white sense we have wonderful infrastructure here thanks to European funds. In every local community there is an aqua park, wonderful roads, outdoor gyms – anything you care to imagine. But if you go to local communities in Romania, Poland and the Baltic states you see that something is missing as a result of this – whatever you call it – development, social change, modernisation. In different disciplines they have different names for these processes, but the meaning is the same. What do you think of this idea, this kind of segmented development, where these social remittances come into particular segments of society?**

Are you saying: What is missing in those places for you?

**Changes in mentality, in norms, practices, in human capital, all that sort of thing. Migrants might come back with a more open mind, right? Or if they close their minds it is based on experience, not imagination or whatever. It's about these soft things – segments relating to specific categories of social remittances: norms, values, skills, whatever.**

I think I understand what you are asking me. First of all I would want to be really careful about not using words like evolution, or thinking that everything that people bring back with them is going to be a good thing. It is not a surprise to me that countries change unevenly, which I think is what you are talking about, or that certain sectors and certain people are affected differently than others. And so, again, I think that's actually a research question. If your question is about political change and you believe in a democratic form of government, then the research question is: is there a sequence of change that makes additional change more possible, that almost fertilises the ground for additional inputs? In other words: is it easier to receive some ideas first and then it predisposes you to other ideas? That is a research question. Is it easier when elites adapt first so then others follow? That is also a research question.

**But what we see here in this part of the world is that these macro changes ordered by political elites have gone quite well, but it's the grass-roots level that's been forgotten. So we've seen these grassroots processes maybe on a micro or meso scale but what's been forgotten, in a sense, is that this system transformation is not about top-down but bottom-up processes.**

But doesn't Poland as a nation have to undergo this process? Forget about immigrants. Yes, maybe migrants help this and maybe they do not. Maybe people come back and say 'this is what was happening in London' and people say 'forget that, do not look at that country. They have race riots, their economy is faltering because their welfare state is being eviscerated'. Social remittances are not going to bring about national political transformation on their own. That is like putting the responsibility for development on the backs of migrants. That is a dangerous and unfair strategy.

**And to wrap up this preface, what do social remittances mean for you in a theoretical sense? Are they theory, concept, ontology? What would you call them after twenty years of reflecting on them?**

Definitely, the idea of social remittances is not a theory. It is a concept that helps us understand the relationship between migrating people and migrating culture in a densely textured world. We see these things when we use a transnational optic or gaze. I strongly believe that you can't understand what happens to someone in a country of settlement if you don't consider their enduring ties to their country of origin. I also believe you can't understand the impact of economic remittances without looking at their social consequences and vice versa.

**Thank you.**

Thank you.



# From Potential to Actual Social Remittances? Exploring How Polish Return Migrants Cope with Difficult Employment Conditions

Mateusz Karolak\*

*The aim of this paper is to examine individual social remittances in the sphere of employment, against the background of the changing employment patterns and flexibilisation of work. Through an analysis of life stories of post-accession return migrants from the UK to Poland, it investigates the way in which returnees' work experience gathered abroad impacts on their perception of employment standards in general. The revealed differences are understood as 'potential social remittances', i.e. the discrepancies acknowledged by returnees between the realities experienced during emigration and after their return (in this case to Poland). It is argued that the actualisation of the 'potential social remittances' depends on return migrants' coping strategies as well as on the institutional and structural settings in returnees' home country. The four main distinguished strategies are: re-emigration, activism, adaptation and entrepreneurship.*

*Keywords: return migration; social remittances; precarisation; employment patterns*

## Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that return migration impacts both the receiving and the sending countries in many ways (e.g. Carling, Mortensen and Wu 2011). Although financial remittances have gained much attention among migration researchers, the cultural transfers have also become a subject of their interest. Social remittances in the form of norms, practices, identities and social capital circulate across borders and, depending on circumstances, might alter migrants' attitudes and behavioural patterns as well as the local and national socio-cultural-economic reality (Levitt 1998, 2001).

An important part of social remittances are those connected with work and employment. Different career patterns, new meanings ascribed to work, as well as specific organisational solutions are among those social transfers which might be brought back by migrants. However, the acquisition and further deployment of social remittances depend not only on migrants' experiences and agency, but also on the constantly changing institutional and structural settings in the sending and receiving countries (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2013). Among the most discussed changes in contemporary societies are those in patterns of employment and, more generally,

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in the sphere of work. In recent decades Europe has witnessed a shift towards flexible employment forms, growth of the dual labour market, and an increase in labour precariousness (Standing 2011; ETUI 2015). Obviously the pace and the scope of these changes differ between countries, among others between those with advanced market economies and the post-socialist countries which joined the European Union (EU) since 2004 (Bohle and Greskovits 2012; Meardi 2012).

At the macro level the enlargement of the EU has been viewed as a chance for social and economic convergence among all EU countries. However the potential ‘Europeanisation’ of the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) countries and their implementation of good working conditions characterised by the ‘European Social Model’ were opposed by the model and threat of ‘Americanisation’ and the further dismantling of the welfare state, including increased flexibility of employment in the core EU countries (Meardi 2012). With respect to employment standards in the CEECs, while much attention has been paid to the consequences of the new member states’ adjustments to EU law (Trappmann 2011) as well as the macroeconomic consequences of the EU enlargements, the impact of the post-accession migration and work-related social remittances brought by returning migrants remains a largely unexplored issue.

Therefore the aim of this paper is to examine the individual social remittances in the sphere of employment, against the background of the changing employment patterns and flexibilisation of work. Through an examination of the returnees’ life stories the paper investigates the way in which work experiences abroad impact return migrants’ perception of employment standards in general. The revealed differences will be understood as ‘potential social remittances’, i.e. discrepancies acknowledged by returnees between the realities experienced during emigration and after return. The main research questions focus on the return migrants’ responses (coping strategies) with respect to the tensions, both real and imagined, created by the differing employment standards, and what role this plays in the actualisation of the potential social remittances.

The case study concerns post-accession migrants who have returned from the United Kingdom to Poland. These two countries were chosen for a variety of reasons. Poland, with its embedded neoliberal regime (Bohle and Greskovits 2012), belongs to those EU countries with the highest share of atypical employment contracts (ETUI 2015). Moreover, after 2004 it was the country with the highest, in absolute figures, migration outflow. At the same time the UK, with its liberal market economy (Hall and Soskice 2001) and one of the most flexible labour markets in the world (Schwab 2014), became the most popular destination of Polish post-accession migrants<sup>1</sup> (CSO 2015). Furthermore, Polish migrants in the UK are in jeopardy on the labour market for at least two reasons. First, similarly to many other migrants (Piore 1979) the incomers from the CEECs tend to work in the low paid, insecure jobs, characterised by a high level of numerical flexibility and precariousness in industries such as hospitality, catering, construction and manufacturing (Currie 2007; Ciupijus 2011) Second, not only were they migrants, but in addition young people – most of them being between 15-34 years old (Okólski and Salt 2014) – who nowadays tend to have structurally worse positions on the labour market than the middle-aged (Standing 2011; Hodder and Kretos 2015). On the other hand, Polish migrants in the UK are better educated than the pre-accession migrants and those remaining in Poland (Trevena 2013; Okólski and Salt 2014). Moreover, there is empirical evidence from other countries suggesting that migrants’ young age fosters their socio-cultural integration and thus improves their labour market position (e.g. Fokkema and de Haas 2011).

Migration, however, is not always permanent. Researchers have characterised the post-accession movement of people in terms of its ‘liquidity’ (Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski 2009; Engbersen, Snel and De Boom 2010) and migrants unwillingness to pre-determine the length of their stay abroad (Drinkwater and Garapich 2013), which has been called ‘intentional unpredictability’ (Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich 2007). Eventually many Polish migrants either return (at least temporary) to their country of origin or move to another country (Smoliner, Förschner, Hochgerner and Nova 2011; Lang 2013). Depending on the time period examined as

well as the definition of return migrant the estimated numbers of Polish returnees vary between 580 000 and 2 900 000 (Anacka, Matejko and Nestorowicz 2013). Although the scale of return migration from the UK to Poland is imprecise, the very fact of return migration is undeniable. Moreover, most of the return migrants worked abroad (CSO 2013), which in turn leads to questions addressed in this paper.

Following a brief overview of historical examples of social remittances in the sphere of work brought by Polish returnees, the paper reviews the existing literature devoted to the specificity of the post-accession migration to the UK and return migration to Poland. Next it outlines the methodological background used to obtain the research results, which is divided into two main parts. The first part presents the narrations of selected returnees concerning the disadvantages of work in Poland as compared to the UK, whereas the second part discusses coping strategies employed by returnees facing the described discrepancies, and assesses their potential for the actualisation of social remittances. Finally, the identified strategies are juxtaposed with the ideal types of responses given by members of organisation to various discontents, as described by Albert O. Hirschman (1970) in *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty. Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*.

### **Social remittances and Polish migration after 1989**

Return migrants have played a crucial role in the changing attitudes towards work in Poland following the systemic transformations in 1989. It is estimated that between 1989 and 2002 more than 80 per cent of immigrants arriving to Poland had Polish citizenship<sup>4</sup> Almost half of them were experts (31 per cent) or managers and high administrative officials (16 per cent) (CSO 2013). Qualitative research on the post-transformation, highly skilled return migrants, conducted by Britta Klagge and Katrin Klein-Hitpaß (2010: 1643), found that ‘[i]n general, during their time in Western capitalist economies, the interviewees [returnees] acquired (tacit) knowledge not available within the Polish workforce’. This subsequently helped them to advance their positions on the labour market and to accelerate their careers. While in the beginning of the 1990s many types of skills were expected from the highly skilled returnees (e.g. language, marketing and managerial skills), with the passage of time and improvement of the Polish education system the employers’ expectations changed. Managerial and communication skills, but not purely linguistic, became the most desired characteristics sought from the returnees (Klagge and Klein-Hitpaß 2010). Analysis of the interviews led the afore-mentioned authors to the conclusion that ‘return migrants make important contributions to introduce organisational changes and new management styles in (some) work environments and thus support the adaptation to Western standards’ (Klagge and Klein-Hitpaß 2010: 1693). The social remittances transferred by highly-skilled returnees were deemed an important element of building the new capitalist order. Return migrants from the Western capitalist economies belonged to those persons serving as role models of the entrepreneurial, active, self-reliant *homo economicus*, in contrast to the passive *homo sovieticus*, pictured as dependent on the state and other people (see Buchowski 2006). However, not all return migrants remained permanently in Poland, as almost one third of them re-emigrated (Fihel and Górny 2013).

In other countries researchers have also concentrated on the impact of diaspora and return migration on the (economic) *development* of the origin countries, seeing in returnees a chance for modernisation of the so-called developing countries (Dahles 2009). With the passage of time, however, scholars have come to acknowledge that the returnees’ transfers might influence not only the economy but also other spheres of life and that they should not always be evaluated positively (Levitt 2001). For example, return migrants could use their entrepreneurship for developing criminal activities or, in less extreme cases, adhere to the values which are not held by the majority of a conservative society. This in turn leads to the crucial question: in what circumstances might return migrants become agents of change and successfully transfer social remittances? In analysing situation of migrants returning in the 1970s from the US to Italy, Francesco Cerase pointed out a structural

factor constraining their agency. As summed up by Jean-Pierre Cassarino (2004: 258), ‘Cerase observes that these returnees [the innovators] are unlikely to be actors of change in their home countries because of the resilience of strong power relations and vested interests which prevent innovators from undertaking any initiatives that could jeopardise the established situation and the traditional power structure’. On the other hand, the structural and institutional powers can also facilitate the returnees’ agency and their real impact on their society. For instance, since the 1990s the Chinese government has actively supported the return of highly skilled migrants, who have transferred not only economic but also cultural and social capital. Therefore, Chinese returnees are expected to ‘eventually transform Chinese business culture and make it more adaptable to the global economy’ (Dahles 2009: 6). However, it remains underexplored what role is played in the transfer of social remittances by the returnees’ individual attitudes and strategies. This issue is particularly relevant in today’s era of hyper-mobility and the transformation of transnational spaces, such as the EU.

Following the enlargement of the EU in 2004 the opportunity structure for the new EU citizens changed, as labour market restrictions were gradually withdrawn, which was followed by a mass East-to-West migration. The post-accession Polish migrants in the UK differ with respect to their socio-demographic characteristics from both the pre-accession migrants and migrants to the ‘old destination countries’ such as Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy and France. In general, Poles in the UK are relatively young and their median age is 6–7 years younger, compared to the Polish migrants in Germany (Kaczmarczyk 2012). There is also an overrepresentation of migrants with tertiary education (Trevena 2009). However, despite the relatively high level of education of Poles in the UK and their high economic activity rate (85 per cent), this does not necessarily translate into good positions on the British labour market (Currie 2007). As noted by Okólski and Salt (2014: 14), with the increase in the number of Polish immigrants in the UK their occupational structure has changed, shifting towards basic and low-skilled jobs. For many young immigrants, work in the UK was their first experience on the labour market. Paulina Trevena (2013) pointed to the combination of the structural demand on the British labour market for the migrants’ low-skilled labour, the unprecedented number of young graduates in Poland, the existing migrant network, and finally the migrants’ temporary acceptance of low-skilled jobs in exchange for relatively high earnings, which allowed them to lead a certain life style. Nevertheless, over time some migrants managed to climb the career ladder (Knight, Lever and Thompson 2014), overcoming not only the dual labour market but also gender divisions (Aziz 2015). Other findings (Cieślik 2011; McGhee, Heath and Trevena 2012) showed that already while in the UK some Polish migrants became aware of and dissatisfied with the differences between Poland and the UK in terms of work and earning conditions, which in turn contributed to their reluctance to return.

Despite the fact that some migrants in the course of life make binding commitments, the tendency is rather the reverse and more often migrants’ plans change (Drinkwater and Garapich 2013). It is worth noting that this also happens after return, which leads to re-emigration or, as dubbed by Anne White (2014) ‘double return migration’. Although freedom of movement within the EU, combined with the abandonment of work permission requirements, contributed to the already existing problems of adequate measurement of intra-EU migration flows and stock, there are some estimations with regard to the number of Polish returnees. According to the Polish Census 2011, between 2002 and 2011 almost 300 000 migrants who spent at least one year abroad returned to Poland (74 000 from the UK, and 51 000 of them between 2007–2011) (CSO 2013: 73). Other numbers are provided by authors of the report edited by Krystyna Slany and Brygida Solga (2014). Using yearly publications from the Central Statistical Office of Poland they estimated<sup>2</sup> that the number of migrants returning to Poland after spending at least three-months abroad varies between 723 000 in 2008 and 455 000 in 2011 (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Structure of the Polish citizens staying abroad and based upon it estimation of the number of return migrants in years 2007–2012 (in thousand)**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Polish permanent residents staying abroad for at least three months	2 270	2 210	2 100	2 000	2 060	2 130
including:						
staying abroad shorter than a year	1 135	663	525	400	515	532
staying abroad longer than a year	1 135	1 547	1 575	1 600	1 545	1 598
Return migrants		723	635	500	455	462

Source: Słany and Solga (2014): 52, and author's own calculation regarding 2012.

While so far there is no quantitative research explicitly devoted to return migration from the UK to Poland, nonetheless a rough idea of its scale may be derived by the comparison of two datasets. First, from April 2004 to end of September 2014 there were 1 272 511 National Insurance Numbers (NINo) issued in the UK for Polish adult nationals (DWP Stat-Xplore). Second, according to the estimates of the Central Statistical Office of Poland, at the end of 2014 there were 685 000 Polish permanent residents (*zameldowani na pobyt stały w Polsce*) who stayed in the UK for longer than three months (CSO 2015). Due to the differing definitions of a 'migrant' (including or excluding minors and those not registered), these two datasets are not directly comparable, however one can deduce that there were *at least* 587 000 adult Poles who, between April 2004 and September 2014, obtained a NINo and at the end of 2014 were not in the UK (for longer than three months).<sup>3</sup> This does not necessarily mean that they all returned to Poland since they could have migrated to another country, died, or simply stayed in the UK during that time, but for a stay shorter than three months.

The main reason for migrants' return to Poland appears to be the accomplishment of their migration aims (either spending a certain amount of time abroad or earning a planned amount of money) (Anacka and Fihel 2013: 51). Moreover, the reasons declared for their return vary between those related to family and work, and often are a combination of instrumental and non-instrumental aims, all of which make up the returnee's life project, revised in the course of migration (Karolak 2015). Another characteristic of the post-accession return migration to Poland is its selectivity, which has led to the 'washing out' of certain groups from Polish society (e.g. people younger than 24 years old with secondary education) (Anacka and Fihel 2012, 2013) This selectivity led to a discussion on the long term impact of migration on both the migrants themselves and Polish society. The discourses of 'brain waste' and 'brain drain' were replaced by those of 'brain circulation' and 'brain gain' (Fihel, Kaczmarczyk, Wolfeil and Zylicz 2009). However, any unequivocal evaluation the results of migration is impeded by the diversity of return migration.

The existing research provides mixed evidence with regard to the return migrants' situation on the Polish labour market. Paweł Kaczmarczyk and Magdalena Lesińska (2012: 31) suggest that so far the migratory experience is not perceived as an advantage on the Polish labour market, in contrast to the knowledge of foreign languages and other soft skills. Nonetheless Katarzyna Budnik (2007: 14–15) states that:

*The return migrants had around three times higher probability of finding the job after a return to the source country than unemployed or non-participants. (...) If the return migrants were positively selected or they were able to accumulate a job relevant human capital abroad, an increase of emigration after 2004 might be seen as a factor reinforcing labour market activity foremost of those who would otherwise find it hard to enter employment.*



On the other hand, an analysis of the ethno-survey conducted by Izabela Grabowska showed that ‘only 8 per cent of Polish returnees could enhance their career after return, while the majority of the respondents state that either nothing has changed in terms of their career path or that the experience of migration has even enhanced the fragmentation of their career’ (as quoted in Smoliner *et al.* 2011: 6). Based on an analysis of the LFS from the years 1999–2009, Marta Anacka and Agnieszka Fihel (2013: 68) conclude that: in comparison with the non-migrants, [return] migrants are clearly less likely to find employment in Poland. One of the authors’ hypothesis to explain this phenomenon is that it could happen due to the auto-selection of the unemployed migrants, who initially had left Poland because they could not find employment. After return they presumably found themselves in the analogical situation. This explanation corresponds with the concept of a ‘migratory trap’ developed by Krystyna Iglicka (2010). According to her research, young Poles often work abroad below their qualifications in the secondary labour market, which significantly disadvantages their career prospects upon return. Encountering problems with integration into the Polish labour market, returnees often eventually decide to re-emigrate, which leads them to once again take an underprivileged labour market position, thus falling into the ‘migration loop trap’.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, there is a very clear increase in the percentage of returnees running their own businesses. While before emigration only 1 per cent of the future migrants had their own business, after emigration this figure has risen already from 12 to 19 per cent (CDS 2010; Iglicka 2010; CSO 2013). Some analysts have concluded that such an increase clearly indicates that emigration teaches self-reliance and awakens ‘the spirit of the entrepreneurship’ (CDS 2010: 56). However, the results of the census show that only 4 per cent (i.e. out of the 61 per cent of working returnees) employed somebody else, while 15 per cent were self-employed without employees (CSO 2013: 75). Taking this into consideration it could be asked to what extent such a high number of self-employed is an outcome of the returnees’ entrepreneurship, and to what extent it is a result of structural constraints in the labour market. As shown by numerous works (e.g. Standing 2011; Schmitz 2013), self-employment is one of forms of the ongoing flexibilisation and precarisation of the labour market. For many companies, pushing employees to become self-employed is a tricky way of lowering labour costs and shifting the risk of market fluctuations on sub-contractors. It would require further and more in-depth examination to determine what motives guided the return migrants to choose this form of labour market activity.

All in all, irrespective of the reasons for migration and subsequent return, the overwhelming majority of adult returnees had worked on the British Isles, often in precarious jobs. The divergent research results point to the fact that despite the attention paid to the subsequent employment of the returnees, the quality of the jobs found by returnees was often overlooked. The next parts of this paper explore in what way returnees perceive their employment in Poland, as well as how their experiences translate into social remittances and affect returnees’ individual strategies on the Polish labour market.

### **Research design and methodology**

Following the methodologies established in the biographical tradition of Fritz Schütze (2007), between November 2013 and January 2015 twenty-six biographical narrative interviews with Polish returnees from the UK (14), and re-emigrants to the UK (12) were carried out.<sup>6</sup> Biographical narrative interviews allow for capturing two dimensions, namely: the objective course of migrants’ work experiences, and the subjective perception of their own situation (cf. Hughes 1997). Knowledge of the entirety of migrants’ life stories is also important in order to better understand social remittances. As pointed by Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2011: 2): ‘we argue that people’s experiences prior to migration strongly influence what they do in the countries where they settle; this, in turn, affects what they remit back to their homelands’.

The research concerned long-term migrants, who had worked in the UK at least one year, and after return lived in Poland for at least six months, irrespective of their reasons for migration, return, and re-emigration (if such occurred). Interviews with the returnees were conducted in the Lower Silesia region of Poland and in Warsaw, while those with re-emigrants were conducted in the major cities of Scotland as well as in London. Fourteen of the interviewees were women, and twelve were men. They were from different social, economic and educational backgrounds and aged between 23–50, with the predominant number of those interviewed being between 25–35 years old. The respondents were initially recruited by snowball sampling, mailing, and *via* Internet forums for migrants. During the second stage of the research the sampling became theoretical and interviewees were chosen from the established contacts database. This gave the possibility to explore more in depth categories emerging from the collected data and to aim at data saturation. The interviews included biographical issues, explored the motives and motivations for migration, return and re-emigration, as well as addressed returnees' post-migration experiences on the labour market. The interviews were analysed following the procedures of grounded theory methodology (GTM) (Glaser and Strauss 1967), including open coding and selective coding. A software NVivo 10 was employed for more systematic data comparison. The results of the research are presented in the next section.

### **Redefinition of normality**

It has already been acknowledged that living in a different society can lead to the development by migrants of a new version of normality (Rabikowska 2010; McGhee *et al.* 2012). While the previous researchers explored Polish migrants' attitudes toward the material aspects of life and highlighted their satisfaction with the broader possibilities of consumption (McGhee *et al.* 2012) as well as relative income security and different work standards abroad (Cieślak 2011), the redefinition of normality also concerns their perception of the work environment and work-related practices upon their return.

There were two groups of returnees: those who had never worked in Poland and those with work experience before their migration. The former group often treats return as a 'test' to 'see how it is'. As explained by Piotr: *We wanted to try. You know, if you don't experience something first-hand you won't know* (Piotr, male, 34 y, architect in London, re-emigrant). Return to Poland was also frequently not treated as a definitive move and migrants *did not want to burn bridges* (W8) behind them, maintaining open bank accounts and contacts with their previous employers in the UK. These returns were also combined with a search for a more prestigious occupation. Another group, in turn, consisted of target earners and those who return for non-instrumental, mainly family-related, reasons. An additional factor which was not without significance for their decision was the positive picture of a developing Poland presented by the media at the end of the first decade of the 2000s, as well as a conviction that many other migrants had also returned.

Irrespective of their work experience before migration, all the returnees I talked to had worked in the UK. Upon return those who took up a steady job compared different aspects of work 'here and there', redefining what is 'normal at work'. The returnees admitted that they *changed their expectations' and started 'thinking in an English way* (W3).

*I think that once you see that it can be otherwise, then you expect something else. I think that there are dilemmas, and perhaps everyone who returns experiences such a contrast. (...) I really realised that some things are not normal, and I had got used to normal* (Krzysztof, male, 30 y, receptionist in Wrocław).

This alteration of migrants' attitudes and expectations is a necessary, but insufficient by itself, condition for subsequent social remittances, which still need to be transmitted and implemented in a migrant's country of

origin. Hence this part of the paper focuses on those aspects of work in the UK which – in comparison to what returnees experienced on their return – appeared to them most striking, namely: more adequate earnings and better workplace relationships in the UK; while the assessment of the work–life balance was more individual and ambiguous, although generally favourable to the UK.

### *More adequate earnings*

Since the most popular declared reason for migration was the possibility of higher earnings, it should not come as a surprise that most of the returnees pointed to the differences in incomes. Returnees underlined not so much the absolute level of income as the possibility of living a ‘decent life’, maintaining themselves on a single and relatively simple job abroad (see also McGhee *et al.* 2012). Monika, who lived, worked, and studied in Scotland for six years, describes her two-year experience following her return to Poland. It is important to note that she had not worked in Poland before her emigration at age 20.

*Every day it's just trying to make ends meet, each time it's from the first to the first [day of each month]. You never have money for a dentist or new shoes, never, never. If you compare this with the life, which in terms of ideas, organisation and finances is a life in which you just overcome obstacles and swim, here I have the feeling that I'm swimming not in water but in a tar. Very, very slowly (Monika, female, 29 y, NGO worker in Wrocław).*

Monika lacked the ‘income security’, identified by Guy Standing (2011: 10) as an ‘adequate and stable income’, assured not only by work itself but in case of lower paid jobs also by certain state policies such as minimum wage or progressive taxation. Returnees’ income insecurity also concerned its regularity, which in turn depended on the type of employment contract. Savings brought from the UK might serve as a buffer reducing income instability, however this could only be a short-term solution, as described by Maria and her husband:

*You know, first of all you need to have enough money to live. And this, so to say, wasn't our strong point in Poland. All the time we have lived from our savings or from that what Piotr [the interviewee's husband] brought in from his company. But he worked on different terms, he was employed on specific task contracts [umowa o dzieło], and each time the contract ended we were afraid there wouldn't be another one. So there was nothing stable for us (Maria, female, 27 y, office worker in London, re-emigrant).*

Maria's experience was no different from that of thousands of non-migrants, since Poland is one of the European leaders in terms of atypical employment contracts (ETUI 2015). Besides the numerous fixed-term contracts, a specific feature of the Polish labour market is the relatively high share of persons employed solely on the least secure civil-law contracts (Mrozowicki and Maciejewska, in print). However, for some returnees the type of contract ensuring income stability was of secondary importance and only income adequacy was crucial for their sense of stability:

*(...) here you don't have a sense of stability like there, there you can do the worst job, but you feel secure, here you don't have this, you live a little bit like day to day. (...) In the UK I could have a civil-law contract [but] I felt like I would have had to do I don't know what to lose my job. Here it is not like that, at least I don't feel it (Krzysztof, male, 30 y, receptionist in Wrocław).*

Krzysztof's statement illustrates an interesting paradox. Although Polish migrants in the UK are often employed in the secondary labour market and migrants are considered to be in a vulnerable and precarious position, they don't consider themselves as such, since they use their previous experiences as a reference point. In Poland in turn, even with a so-called typical contract, due to inadequacy of income returnees' subjective sense of security is lower than it was in the UK. Since young people in Poland tend to normalise their work-related insecurity (Mrozowicki, Krasowska and Karolak 2015), the question arises whether the transfer of returnees' experiences might impact non-migrants' perception of work standards and contribute to the slowly growing protests against the precarious nature of work in Poland.

### *Workplace relationships*

Income and type of contract are not, however, the only components of a worker's sense of well-being. Return migrants also underlined the differences in the way they were treated as employees. They refer to the *professionalism, emotional moderation and diplomacy* of their bosses in the UK. As recalled by Piotr: *No one raises his voice, no one screams, no one tenses up, this is more a partnership approach* (M7). Polish employees in the UK felt that they were respected, which was often not the case in Poland. Moreover, the fact of being on a first name basis with all co-workers and bosses – a practice rather rare in Poland, especially between young workers and older superiors – is treated by the returnees as a sign of the modesty of the bosses. Stanisław describes it as follows:

*The bosses are as if equal with you, they don't have an exalted position. People [at work] are also helpful, there is not such a competition. In Poland it is more often a rat race. (...) [In the UK] people trust the employee. For example in the company in London where I used to work, quite often I worked from home. Nobody controlled me. I could just work from home, I worked on my computer, and nobody appraised what I did* (Stanisław, male, 33 y, engineer in Glasgow, re-emigrant).

While this relatively high level of worker's autonomy is appreciated by Polish migrants, it differs depending on the sectors in which the migrants worked. The 'partnership approach' and trust resulting from it is also perceived not only as a feature of the work environment, but more broadly as a feature of British society and institutions. Returnees complained about the lack of the mutual trust in Poland and pointed out that the same is also demonstrated by the state administration, which *assumes that you are trying to cheat* (M7) and expects to have official confirmation of all statements. On the other hand the migrants themselves do not trust their compatriots. In their narrations, success in Poland is often linked with fraud. *They need to cheat, play games. It's sad but you can't live normally and cope as a human being; you need to swindle, do monkey business. If somebody wants to live honestly, then it's rather hard or impossible* (W6). Although returnees noticed also negative aspects of the work environment in the UK, they tended to idealise it. This might have several sources. On the one hand, faced with difficulties after their return migrants might feel nostalgic about the idealised past abroad. On the other hand, in the case of re-emigrants the emphasis on the contrast between work in Poland and in the UK serves as a mean for easing the sometimes difficult transition between countries. Moreover, it might be understood as an element of the rationalisation of their re-emigration, by perceiving it as a necessity. It would however require further examination to fully explore and understand such attitudes.

### *Work–life balance*

Income insecurity, the low level of autonomy, and the stronger hierarchy at work translate into stresses related to work. However, comparison of the work–life balance experienced in the UK and Poland differs depending on the initial aims of the migration. The target earners often worked two jobs at the same time and/or took as much overtime as possible. Their sacrifice of free time was a conscious strategy aimed at maximising profits. For example, Andrzej recalls:

*The work was good but it was hard. Because I wanted to earn quickly I got the idea that every third week I will have only one day off. (...) I was totally exhausted and we had an hour-and-a-half commute to work every day, so I was at home around 8 p.m. [It was] operating at the limits. I managed somehow, but it was really tough (Andrzej, male, 50 y, production worker in Legnica).*

Both young and middle-aged target earners ‘bite the bullet’ and hold out in order to achieve their initial aim. For them their work after return, despite some of the already-described inconveniences, was a relief, made all the more valuable by the fact that they were closer to their families.

In contrast, those who went to the UK *not just to earn but to live*, complained upon their return to Poland about employers who expected them to work overtime, often without payment. Work in Poland was even compared to *slavery* (M7), driven in the returnee’s opinion by students willing to work without pay, just for the experience.

All in all, the fact that most returnees faced different treatment at work in Poland than in the UK led to discrepancies between their perceptions of ‘how it should be at work’ and ‘how it is’. If eventually these discrepancies could be eased at the workplace and returnees change the reality so that it meets – or at least approaches – their expectations, this would be a sign of social remittances. Thus in the next section I present types of coping strategies applied by the returnees in the sphere of work and discuss their impact on practices in the workplace in Poland.

### **Strategies of coping with work-related tensions**

Analysis of the interviews enabled me to distinguish four main strategies employed by return migrants facing distress resulting from the discrepancies between the employment standards they experienced in the UK and in Poland. It must be noted at the outset that these strategies are ideal types which emerged from analytical abstraction, and in certain returnees’ cases they overlapped or/and shifted over time. The identified strategies are: re-emigration, adaptation, activism and entrepreneurship.

#### *Re-emigration – exit*

The first identified strategy, re-emigration, refers to leaving Poland and moving back to the UK. The lack of formal barriers constraining intra-EU mobility facilitate this decision. In addition to short-term, seasonal migrants, who deliberately engage in back and forth migration, often earning abroad and living in Poland (Fihel and Grabowska-Lusinska 2014), there is another group consisting of those who, after long-term migration, decided to ‘give Poland a chance’ and treated their return as a test. When ‘the test failed’ these migrants – in their own words – ‘returned’ to the UK. Despite the reluctance of the most of the re-emigrants to make binding declarations regarding their future, their actions – such as acquiring properties or striving to obtain qualifications recognised in the UK – indicate that their second emigration to the UK might be expected to be more

permanent. The decision to re-emigrate was often triggered by impulse, and in almost all examined cases was preceded by contact with acquaintances, colleagues, or previous employers in the UK. In the opinion of the interviewees, maintaining the transnational ties, including after their return to Poland, gave them a greater sense of security, as they ‘could always leave again’. Interestingly, some of the interviewees felt committed more to the previous managers than the companies they used to work for. Grzegorz, explained how he left Poland for the second time, this time ‘for good’:

*It [the decision] was maturing in my mind. And it was that moment when I received my salary, a bag with coins. 360 coins – 5 Polish Zloty each, all together an enormous [ironically] amount of 1 800 Polish Zloty for spending all my nights there (...) it was when I got this salary in coins that something again broke in myself (...) and I told him [the boss], ‘pal, you better start looking for somebody for this evening’. Since I was working at nights and I was finishing at 8 am, I went to the Internet cafe and in just three days I found people going by car to Scotland. (...) Despite the fact that I had left [Scotland], I didn’t close all doors in different small enterprises where I’d worked before. So on Saturday I called a colleague of mine (...) and she told me that she would find a job for me when I came (Grzegorz, male, 40 y, small entrepreneur in Scotland, re-emigrant).*

Re-emigration was also sometimes a spontaneous answer to a job offer received from abroad. This might be interpreted in terms of the ‘exit option’ proposed by Hirschman (1970). Exit is perceived to be the easiest solution in cases of discontent with a particular sphere of one’s life, in this case the labour market conditions. The identified tensions are relieved by the employment of such an individualised strategy, and the ‘potential social remittances’ remain unrealised. It would require further examination to see if the ‘double return migrants’ raise their voices and engage in any actions from abroad in order to change the situation back in Poland, as was the case with the migrants’ communities in Boston actively supporting their compatriots in Boca Canasta (Levitt 2001), or the Moroccan diaspora in France (Sahraoui 2015). Although Hirschman (1970) saw a negative correlation between exit and voice, as in his view exit ‘drives out the voice’, when we take a transnational perspective we can observe that exit might also develop a voice (Hoffmann 2010).

So far Polish migrants seem to organise in the UK mainly in order to improve their situation there rather than change the (work) reality in Poland. Nevertheless some Polish political parties (e.g. the newly-established *Razem* [Together], which calls itself a party of the Polish precariat) search in London and in other British cities for active supporters, those who believe that they can contribute to the development of employment standards in Poland.

#### *Adaptation – loyalty*

The second observed strategy was gradual adaptation and acceptance of standards different from those abroad. Despite the clear differences observed in the sphere of work, a portion of returnees eventually adjusted to the Polish reality. For example Maja, after an initial period of disagreement, changed her attitude:

*You can get used to it. After one, two months in Poland, I was saying to myself: My goodness, that’s simply how it is here. ‘Maja, where are we?’ And I answered [to myself] ‘In Poland’. So you need to put your tail between your legs [podkulić ogon] and be nice to the lady who is the office clerk, because she rules here... (Maja, female, 26 y, self-employed copywriter in Wrocław).*

The lower income and worse employment standards are perceived to be a result of the 'Polish mentality' and Poland's economic position, sometimes ascribed to the post-socialist legacy. These factors are seen as structurally embedded, hence one needs to adjust. The returnees' conviction of their own agency is rather weak.

Adaptation was also a strategy employed by migrants who returned for reasons other than work-related. They knew that if they wanted to save the family, be closer with the elderly parents, or simply finish their education they needed to readjust their expectations.

*Maybe there [in the UK] I had more time to think everything through. And I realised there that I needed to lower the level of my expectations, so that I could also have satisfaction from a simple job. So I returned from England... found a job, a simple job in a facto for 8 hours a day – something I totally could not picture. Of course there are disadvantages because you have less money, but the life is more stabilised, more calm, because I'm with the family, and perhaps now I'm the most happy in my entire life (Andrzej, male, 50 y, production worker in Legnica).*

Adaptation, if translated into Hirschman's terms, might be compared to loyalty. The potential social remittances are not actualised and over time the discontent with work decreases, although it does not totally disappear. The adaptation might also be conditional, and once the reason for being in Poland is no longer relevant, the returnee(s) might consider re-emigration.

#### *Activism – voice*

Activism is the third strategy and the one employed by the smallest group of interviewed returnees. Faced with tensions related to work they undertake actions in order to improve their situation. This strategy might be seen as a resort to voice, which is defined as '*any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, all objectionable states of affairs*' (Hirschman 1970: 30). Activism and a conscious striving for change is a strategy undertaken by returnees convinced of the high level of their agency. Their stay abroad reinforced, or even brought about, their feelings of self-esteem and self-determination. Their actions can be taken either at the workplace or more generally at the local level. Furthermore, such actions can take either an individual or a collective form. While the former is mostly aimed at improving returnees' own situation, the latter answers the needs of a broader group and could, for example, take the form of involvement in trade unionism or engagement in a political party. Activism is the strategy most likely to support/contribute to the transfer and actualisation of social remittances in the sphere of work. However, direct actions aimed at levelling or reducing the uneasiness at the workplace do not always translate into change.

As pointed out by Levitt (1998), the successful transfer of social remittances depends not only on the will and agency of migrants, but also on the potential receiver's readiness to accept some new norms, practices and ideas. To understand how and why some returnees become actors of change, one needs to take into consideration the '*specific institutional, political and economic conditions at home*' (Cassarino 2004: 270). In the case of potential remittances in the sphere of work, the crucial factor seems to be the structural position of the employee, defined in the relation to other employees and, most of all, to managers. A migrant's charisma and ability to attract non-migrants is also of significance. However, the relatively low autonomy experienced by employees in Poland gives them little space for change. Krzysztof, who following his return fell into the 'experience trap' and worked in a luxury hotel in Poland, offered this analysis of the impact of his experience from abroad:

*I think that it [the work experience from the UK] doesn't matter. I mean, I'm working here [and] I used to work in various hotels, (...) that were four–five stars hotels, Marriott, Hilton. It seemed to me that there were high standards and I was in some way trained, but it is not useful at all. This is not useful because coming back here, even if you wanted to implement these standards, you are alone, and after a while you start to work and behave exactly like the others (Krzysztof, male, 30 y, receptionist in Wrocław).*

In his case the failed attempt to 'implement British standards' led him to change his strategy to adaptation.

The activism of returnees could be also institutionalised and directly linked with their return, as was the case of 32-year old Michał, who came back to Poland because of a job offered him by one of the British trade unions. The British union, being aware of the global competition, followed the logic that supporting the organisation of Polish workers will translate into their better working conditions and higher wages in Poland. This, in turn, should lower the competitive pressures on the Polish companies and prevent the race to the bottom on the common EU market. Michał's involvement in trade union movements began in the UK, but currently could translate into improvement of the working conditions in a certain company in Poland. However, the results of his attempts are not clear yet.

#### *Entrepreneurship – exit, voice and loyalty all in one*

The last identified strategy is entrepreneurship, which usually takes the form of self-employment. A few interviewees admitted that among the reasons which pushed them towards working on their own account was 'the fear of working for somebody in Poland'. The decision was, however, also motivated by other factors, such as the desire for self-realisation, expectation of higher earnings, and a need for independence, even though the returnees did not perceive these as problematic when they were an employee in the UK. Indeed, those who eventually re-emigrated were usually employees in the UK (in one case the interviewee was formally self-employed, however he was a subcontractor providing services on regular basis for only one company). Below Stanisław recalls the time when he run his business in Poland:

*Well, in running a company I liked the fact that I was my own boss. I didn't have to work for somebody else. I liked that, but of course it also had some disadvantages. You know, most of the time bosses don't have weekends off, don't have holidays but... that was fine for me. When I already had the company I thought that for sure I wouldn't want to work for somebody in Poland, so later it wasn't even an option. Well, abroad it's totally different, you know (Stanisław, male, 33 y, engineer in Glasgow, re-emigrant).*

The self-employment of returnees might be seen as a specific form of strategy on the Polish labour market which combines all three options: exit, loyalty and voice. It allows the returnees to express their disappointment with the domestic labour market for employees and at the same time remain loyal to the country. Entrepreneurship is also a form of actively 'taking matters into one's own hands'. In the narrations of the self-employed returnees, the prevailing discourse is that of the 'self-made man', who achieved a goal with his/her own work.

*Now I'm aware that if you work hard and you want it, you can earn more and you can live at a different level. So let's say it's a motivation (Radosław, male, 30 y, self-employed translator in Wrocław).*

*Well, I wouldn't blame the employers. I see that there are a lot of shortcomings in my generation, especially with regard to the level of qualifications... I don't know, I think that if you really want to, if you really work*



*hard – we need to be clear about this – you can find the job which you want* (Gosia, female, 23 y, informally employed as a waitress in Wrocław).

Self-employment appears to be a strategy with a high potential for the transfer of social remittances. The returnees' combination of work autonomy and their developed sense of agency leads some to attempt to implement the different work standards and solutions observed abroad. The success of these efforts, however, depends not only on the returnee's will, but also on the general market conditions and the 'prevailing rules of the game'. Despite some positive examples, small entrepreneurs still complained about how difficult it is nowadays in Poland to be a good employer.

*We didn't want to employ anybody on the black market and we didn't want to give a starvation wage, but we just counted how much one needs to earn to maintain themselves in our city. And when we calculated that we'd need to pay all social contributions and pay somebody normally, not peanuts nor a huge sum but just normally, we found out that we couldn't afford it [laughs]* (Agnieszka, female, 25 y, engineer in Edinburgh, re-emigrant).

Piotr, after two years of running a business in Poland and finally re-emigrating, sums it up as follows:

*I mean, in Poland to run a company you need to have a specific approach. You know, that all the time you want to earn as much as possible all at once. There is no long-term thinking and you need to be ruthless to achieve success. And this is not exactly my feature, so perhaps I'm not suitable for doing business in Poland* (Piotr, male, 34 y, architect in London, re-emigrant).

In case of the self-employed, re-emigration often took place after two years of doing business, when the entrepreneurs were faced with losing their special exemption for social services contributions. Faced with high competition, they often decided to close their small enterprises and leave the country.

All in all, the perception of migrants' entrepreneurship as a combination of voice, exit and loyalty avoids a simple dichotomy between passive workers forced into bogus self-employment, and entrepreneurs having a full agency, easily transferring solutions observed abroad.

## **Conclusions and discussion**

The aim of the paper was twofold: first to examine the perceptions of post-accession return migrants about the working conditions in Poland as compared to their (often precarious) experience in the UK; and second to analyse the way in which the comparison of norms and practices in the sphere of work in both countries might translate into social remittances brought by returnees to their home country.

The examination of the biographical narrative interviews with return migrants showed that from their perspective the main disadvantages of work in Poland (as compared to UK) are: 1) low earnings making it impossible to live a decent life; 2) hierarchical relations at work; and 3) the fragile work–life balance.

The research revealed additionally that both return migrants with no previous work experience in Poland as well as successful target earners strongly experienced the acknowledged differences. Moreover, in some cases the migrants' relatively low status on the labour market in the UK and status of being employed in precarious conditions was not perceived as such by the migrants themselves.

Most of the interviewed returnees admit that their emigration changed both their way of thinking and their understanding of 'normal' working conditions. The discrepancies and tensions resulting from the constant

comparison between work ‘there’ and ‘here’ underscored the norms and practices which have been conceptualised as ‘potential social remittances’. Their actualisation, however, depends on the coping strategies adopted by returnees, as well as their structural position and the institutional settings in the home country. Further analysis of the interviews enabled the creation of four ideal types of coping strategies employed by return migrants facing distress resulting from the discrepancies between employment standards. In most cases, re-emigration, activism, adaptation and/or entrepreneurship were the returnees’ main responses to the encountered tensions.

The first three above-listed scenarios correspond with the options described by Hirschman as exit, voice and loyalty. However, in contrast to Hirschman’s position, I argue that they are not mutually exclusive, can change over time, and take different forms in the transnational social field. It would require further research to determine, for example, in what way those returnees who decided to re-emigrate (exit) might undertake efforts from abroad (voice) to change the situation in Poland. The last distinguished strategy, entrepreneurship, is a specific combination of the three options proposed by Hirschman. In leaving the local labour market for employees, self-employed returnees remain loyal to the home country and, by their attempts to implement different work standards, raise their voices against those employment conditions which they find disappointing.

The actualisation of the potential social remittances in sphere of work appears most likely in those cases where returnees are involved in collective (usually institutionalised) actions, as well as in the case of those who choose to start their own business. Individual attempts to implement change turn out to be ineffective, mainly due to the relatively low autonomy of workers, and usually end with a change of strategy, either to re-emigrate or to accept the status quo.

The clear limitation of the presented research is that it provides the view only from the perspective of return migrants. To fully understand the ways in which social remittances might be transferred, adjusted and implemented would require a longitudinal in-depth study at the local level, which would take into account the experiences of both returnees as well as non-migrants.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In addition to Polish citizens, the UK also welcomed migrants from other countries which joined the EU in 2004 (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia), in 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania) and in 2013 (Croatia). However, the citizens of Bulgaria and Romania obtained full access to the British labour market only in 2014 after the UK lifted the transitional restrictions. In the case of Croatia the restrictions apply until June 2018.

<sup>2</sup> The researchers used data provided by the Central Statistical Office of Poland, which since 2008 has started dividing migrants between those who are temporarily abroad for a period shorter than one year and those who are abroad longer than a year. They assumed that all temporal migrants in the  $n$  year, and in the next year ( $n + 1$ ) could be divided into two groups: 1) those who are abroad for longer than a year; and 2) those who returned to Poland. In this way, when one deducts from the total number of Polish emigrants in a certain  $n$  year the number of all migrants who are abroad for longer than a year in the following  $n+1$  year, one obtains the number of those who returned to Poland in the  $n$  year. These calculations yielded the results presented in the Table 1 (for more details, see: Slany and Solga 2014).

<sup>3</sup> This equation is highly speculative and should be read with great caution. However – assuming that the data provided by the British Department for Work and Pensions and the Central Statistical Office of Poland (CSO) are reliable, it reveals the scale of the potential return to Poland. The estimation was made using the following logic: 1) adult Poles who registered for the NINo spent at least a one day in the UK. Reasoning:

if from the total number of NINos issued for Poles from April 2004 to September 2014 one subtracts the number of Poles staying in the UK at the end of 2014 for longer than three months (thus excluding from the equation those who obtained a NINo between October and December 2014 since even if they were in the UK at the end of 2014 they stayed there for a shorter period than 3 months and were not included in the CSO estimations) one gets a minimum number of 587 000 adult Poles who from April 2004 to September 2014 obtained a NINo and at the end of 2014 were not present in the UK for longer than three months. This is a minimum number since there is an assumption that out of the 685 000 Poles reported in the UK by the CSO everyone obtained a NINo, what clearly is not the case. It is also unclear how many out of the estimated 587 000 NINo holders returned to Poland, migrated to another country or died. Moreover, there is a theoretical possibility that a person included in the first set obtained a NINo before October 2014, then left the UK and eventually re-entered the UK after October 2014. One can assume however that the number of such persons is rather low.

<sup>4</sup> This group consisted of migrants who physically returned to Poland and descendants of Polish migrants.

<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that there are differences in the level of returnees' integration, which depend on the region of Poland to which they return. However a detailed analysis of this issue is beyond the scope of this paper. (For more details, see: Brzozowski, Majka, Szymańska and Ułasiński 2015 and the series of regional research conducted by *Centrum Doradztwa Strategicznego*.)

<sup>6</sup> All interviews are anonymous and the names are fictitious. 'M' stands for man and 'W' stands for women, the figure indicates the number of the interview.

## Funding

The work of Mateusz Karolak on this publication was financially supported by the FP7-PEOPLE-2012-ITN project *Changing Employment (The Changing Nature of Employment in Europe in the Context of Challenges, Threats and Opportunities for Employees and Employers*, project no. 317321).

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# Narrating Migrant Workplace Experiences: Social Remittances to Poland As Knowledge of British Workplace Cultures

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*This paper explores how the workplace experience of migrants helps to determine part of the social remittances they can make to their country of origin. The social remittance literature needs to pay more attention to work as an element of the migrant experience. Focus is placed on public internet forums related to newspapers in Poland because these are a very open means of communicating experience to the public sphere. To support the analysis, UK census and other data are used to show both the breadth of work done by Polish migrants in the UK and some of its peculiarities. This is then followed with a more qualitative analysis of selected comments from the gazeta.pl website. The complexities of both the range of migrants' ideas about their work and also the analysis of internet-based newspaper comment sites as a form of public communication are shown.*

*Keywords: workplace; social remittances; post-enlargement migration; internet; UK*

## **Social remittances and the importance of work and the workplace**

This paper poses the question of how the workplace experiences of Polish migrants in the UK might contribute to a neglected form of social remittance transmission, namely the workplace experience. Our aim is twofold. First, using UK census data, we explain the broad context within which Polish migrants have navigated the UK labour market. Second, we demonstrate how migrant narrative involvement in internet discussions in Poland might remit information about the comparative experiences of work. In doing so, we also point to the methodological benefits of blending top-down quantitative data with bottom-up qualitative narrative material when analysing particular nuances in migration research.

It has been argued that paid employment no longer plays the central role in defining our being and the nature of society that it once did (Grint 2005). But if this claim is of questionable validity for the mass of the population it is certainly dubious for those who engage in voluntary international migration. We know that a key motivating factor in migration is the search for better work. This may be a job itself, if the home society is characterised by unemployment; it may be better paid work; or, as Cieslik (2011) suggests, it may be a search for better work conditions. Paid work also creates the basis for the economic remittances that have

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until recently been the almost exclusive focus of work on remittances. In the case of Poland these economic remittances have, in the years since 2004, grown to become the equivalent of some 1.5–2 per cent of GDP with a peak of 2.5 per cent of GDP in 2006–2007, playing an important role in the economy as well as supporting the families and communities that the migrants leave (Barbone, Pietka-Kosinska, and Topinska 2012). World Bank remittance data suggests that in 2011 Poland received US\$7.6 billion of remittances, of which Polish remittances from the UK were US\$1.3 billion (nearly one-sixth), second only to the US\$1.5 billion from Germany and slightly ahead of the US which was in third place as a remittance source in 2011. Direct migrant economic remittances from the UK to Poland appear to average some US\$ 2 000 per employed Polish migrant which, for the individuals involved (some will be sending more, others less or none), will equate to several weeks' wages (authors' calculations from World Bank database). In economic terms, then, work matters for the story of migrants and for an understanding of the experience of migrants themselves.

But we want to suggest that, directly and indirectly, it is the workplace that also occupies a key element in the transmission of social remittances. Following Levitt's original study, social remittances have been seen as combinations of the ideas, know-how, practices, behaviours, identities, etc. that migration allows to flow between people and communities in receiving and sending countries (Levitt 1998). However, it is striking how little attention is paid to the workplace in the social remittance literature. In Levitt's original study, work and the workplace featured intermittently but was not a central focus. By the time of her co-authored 2011 piece it had all but disappeared (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). In this, however, she reflects the more general social remittance literature. Yet work is hugely important in its own right. The employment relationship means that the migrant has little choice over how they interact. They must engage. They cannot 'opt out' and ghettoise themselves as migrant critics claim happens in society at large. They must get along or at least learn enough to survive. In this way the workplace offers on a daily basis an intensity of experience that is rarely encountered in non-work sites. But even if we are more concerned with social remittances born of a wider engagement with the new society, then work is an important means by which migrants negotiate this new world. It may be easier, for example, to ask a work colleague for information and advice about the nature, opportunities or problems of the new society and to trust their answers than general acquaintances. No less, hostile relations at work may negatively affect engagement with society at large.

Fortunately forms of work-related and work-derived social remittances are discussed in some of the literature on the workplace, labour relations and international trade unionism, though the term itself is rarely used – perhaps because commentators in this field are not aware of it rather than because they deliberately avoid it. In the UK, for example, scholars interested in migrants in the workplace and workplace trade unionism have discussed the links between organising strategies and means of communication between Polish migrants within Britain and between organisations and individuals in the UK and Poland, and there have been attempts to theorise forms of what some have called 'distributed discourses' (Martínez Lucio and Walker 2005; Fitzgerald, Hardy, and Lucio 2012). Cieslik (2011) has looked at the ways that Polish migrants think about the non-pay aspects of their work in the UK in comparison with their perception or experience of the workplace in Poland. Galasińska (2009, 2010) has looked at the narratives of Polish economic migrants as they appear on an internet forum.

How then does the workplace mould the migrant experience? There is, of course, no single UK workplace. The UK is an economically more developed society than Poland. Agricultural employment takes up only 1 per cent of the labour force and manufacturing 9 per cent. Most native workers are employed in the various forms of the service sector. Within these sectors people find employment in a wide variety of organisations and an even wider variety of workplaces. Some 28 per cent of UK workers are employed in enterprises of less than 50 employees. A further 18 per cent work in enterprises of 50–249 employees; 18 per cent in those between

250 and 2 499; and 41 per cent in enterprises of over 2 500 (ONS 2013c). Migrant workers are more concentrated. Some 29 per cent of workplaces employ non-UK nationals and in 9 per cent of workplaces migrants make up at least 25 per cent of the workforce. But in most workplaces migrants will be in the minority, and it seems likely that most migrants of any particular nationality will work both with migrants of other nationalities and with many native-born workers. In this sense the ‘national migrant gang’ system, which does exist, and examples of which have received a lot of publicity, is not remotely typical of the experience of most migrants (Strauss 2013). The overall conditions in UK workplaces reflect the amalgam of different economic structures, work traditions, conflicts, cultures, management strategies, and so on. Although there is much discussion of the increasing precariousness of work in the UK and the development of a dichotomised (or ‘hour-glass’) labour market with a mass of unskilled and migrant labour at the bottom, the overall situation in UK workplaces is still relatively good. (It is important here to look at the data produced by both the UK Labour Force Survey and the periodic Workplace Employment Relations Survey [van Wanrooy, Bewley, Bryson, Forth, Freeth, Stokes, and Wood 2013]) This is certainly the case compared to Poland in respect of pay, conditions, social protection, flexibility, etc.

This creates an important contrast. What might appear a poor workplace to a native-born worker may seem a better one to a migrant, even if in skill and education terms they are taking a step down. But once migrant workers become more fully acclimatised and socialised they then make the same judgements as a native-born worker. This might be evident not only in what migrants say but in how they act. Dawson, Veliziotis, and Hopkins (2014) have shown that, for example, rates of absenteeism of new Polish migrants at work in the UK are lower than those of native-born workers. This might be a product of gratitude, a determination to appear useful or simply fear of losing a job. But over time the absenteeism rates of migrants converge with those of native-born workers as there is an implicit learning of ‘the rules of the game’ and changing expectations about what is appropriate behaviour at work and what is not. We might expect, therefore, changes in migrant attitudes to the UK workplace, the longer their immersion in UK life. Equally we must recognise that attitudes about the society from which migrants come may be less dynamic because, as their experience of that society recedes in time or becomes more distant, so their comparative appreciation (or lack of it) may be more ‘frozen’. The migrant experience that forms the basis of both economic and social remittances may also be affected by shorter-term economic fluctuations. Dynamic elements of disorientation, therefore, always exist in both directions as migrants move between societies, and the more so the longer the gaps in movement.

A recognition that migrant workers and native workers may make different but changing judgements can help to guard against the tendency in some accounts of social remittances to uncritically pose the more advanced society as ‘good’ against the ‘bad other’, as well as to encourage us to examine what is the basis of any difference. So, for example, when comments are made about the UK workplace being more collaborative and collective, whereas the Polish workplace is hierarchical and controlled, this might be explained by the ‘superior work culture’ in the United Kingdom. But it could equally be explained by a different management strategy towards the same end of higher output and profit or some other more critical explanation.

If workplaces and workplace cultures are dynamic, then they are also complex. All workplaces are built around formal and informal elements. The formal express more what is supposed to happen, the informal express the more authentic lived experiences. Both of these elements can be reflected at the level of the organisation and are embodied in its technologies, processes, culture, collective bargaining, etc. But they also operate at the level of individual relations between workers and co-workers, workers and managers, status hierarchies, tensions and conflicts. There is, therefore, a complexity to all organisations and workplaces and a variation between them that generations of organisational and workplace sociologists in the UK have sought to understand (see Edgell 2012 for a survey).

## **Research design and methodology**

Our approach in this paper is to bring together two types of data: descriptive statistics and qualitative internet forum data drawn from a major Polish newspaper website. This approach was informed by the interdisciplinary character of migration study and a desire to combine methods in order to capture the complexity of the field. Our descriptive statistics come from UK census data which supersedes earlier accounts based on the first registration of migrants under the temporary Workplace Registration Scheme. UK census data has a high level of reliability both because of the care with which the census is taken and the various quality checks made (see, for example, ONS 2012b). Polish migrants form a large group and were a major subject of interest in the 2011 census, though detailed data is still emerging. The published census data (and that in the detailed reference tables on which we also draw) enable us to get a better, if still incomplete, sense of the various labour-market trajectories of Polish migrants in the UK. While it is common to preface qualitative studies with some descriptive data, there is usually a mismatch between the scale of the number of Polish migrants and the tiny and often specialised nature of the groups used in qualitative analysis. Crucially we use the descriptive data to show the wide variety of regions, economic sectors and hierarchical occupational levels in which Polish migrants can be found. Our data will show the relative lack of segmentation of Polish migrants and their movement within the labour market, both horizontally and vertically. This enables Polish migrants to experience a wide range of workplaces both by sector and region. It is this breadth of experience illustrated in our descriptive statistics that we believe lends additional interest to the qualitative data drawn from the forum on the Polish website that we investigate.

The ephemeral nature of comments on internet forums might seem to make them a more dubious source of evidence for analysis than, say, the writings of established commentators or the detailed knowledge that can be gained in interviews. But our choice of data collection for the second part of the study was informed by two interrelated methodological approaches to online data. Firstly, we were driven by media studies research into ‘citizen/participatory journalism’ (Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer, and Vujnovic 2008). While we should not exaggerate the extent to which the internet is a democracy of opinion, such forums give us access to a much larger volume of comment and opinion than has hitherto been available. Crucially, those who contribute are engaged in a much more obvious act of self-creation of opinion and comment. Newspapers and their writers, for example, have always claimed to be the voice of their readers and wider public opinion. They try to create opinion by evoking a rhetorical subject whose views they claim to reflect. The interview, on the other hand, is a much more intimate way to find evidence – so much so that it involves a significant act of co-creation between the interviewer and the interviewee. Interview studies involve such small numbers that we can never be sure about the impact of interviewer selection bias in the sample (as opposed to in the selection of data from the interview themes). Interviews too are affected by power asymmetries between the interviewer and the interviewee and the problem of social desirability bias in responses. To avoid such problems our second methodological influence is the rapidly growing postulate of ethnographers about the value of extending fieldwork to the internet in order to capture the rapidly changing sphere of people’s social and cultural activity (Postill and Pink 2012). This seems to be particularly important in the case of post-enlargement migrants, who are themselves heavy internet users and computer-mediated communicators (Metykova 2010; Pustulka 2015).

With internet forums the decision to contribute, how to contribute and what to say is much more in the control of the contributor, although of course they are affected by the society of which they are a part. The result is ‘the din of small voices’, each calling out to one another and to passing readers (Hargreaves 2005). As an activity and a source this may not be without its problems but it is certainly different in volume, accessibility and, to some extent, in kind from the other types of qualitative data and it is certainly more than

a cacophony of noise. Individuals freely post their opinions and comments on such sites but using their contributions still creates some problems of informed consent, anonymity, and participation, which cannot be overlooked (see for example Sharf 1999). In analysing our data, we therefore follow the British Sociological Association's suggestions (2002), even though the material cannot be seen as sensitive. Although analysis of such data is still relatively new and underdeveloped as an ethnographic field, it seems to us equal to longer-established ones and therefore valuable both in terms of triangulation and in its own right.

To this end we focus on the web portal *gazeta.pl* ([www.gazeta.pl](http://www.gazeta.pl)), which hosts the online version of the leading Polish daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* ([www.wyborcza.pl](http://www.wyborcza.pl)). *Gazeta Wyborcza* was started in 1989 as part of the transition from communism. Over the next two decades it rose to be Poland's bestselling newspaper before its hard copy circulation fell off heavily in the 2010s. But in terms of authority it has retained its high status; it has also played a leading role in creating spaces for discussion on its website and it remains a pole of attraction for Polish migrants abroad. For our study we used a shorter, more 'approachable' and more popular online version for comments, *gazeta.pl* ([www.gazeta.pl](http://www.gazeta.pl)). Those who register get the opportunity to comment on the vast majority of articles available online. These pages contain some 10 000 forums and over 150 million posts are accessible at any one time. The largest forum on the server alone has over 3 million posts.

Data drawn from internet forums give rise to problems of their own. The self-selection bias in terms of contributor (and reader) is important. To contribute one must have the means (information technology and internet access), the skills and the motivation. Migrants and their families at home seem to prioritise the acquisition of mobile phones, computers and other tools of information and communications technology (Pustułka 2015). But there is a larger digital divide from the rest of the population in Poland reflecting economic activity (or inactivity), educational levels and age although surveys suggest that as many as two-thirds of all Poles surf the net at least once a week. Nevertheless, the potential readership is significantly less than the whole population.

The analysis of the nature of website forum comments itself needs some consideration. If we can access the thoughts of contributors that are less mediated than those of interviewees, we usually lack as much access to knowledge of the age, gender and occupation of the forum's participants. Those who actively contribute must be readers but it does not follow that all readers actively contribute. The evidence is that only a small minority do. The forum's 'participatory culture' (Shifman 2011: 19) also complicates our understanding of how or whether at all potential social remittances are received by forum co-participants. Participation is low-cost and can be more or less anonymous. This allows some to adopt stances and say things that they might not say in another context or with less thought for the consequences. While helpful to the researcher in one sense, this can produce an element of stylised debate and mutual provocation. Nevertheless, the 'virtual co-presence' (Urry 2002: 256) of migrants and non-migrants on the forum facilitates and conditions exchange between the two groups.

As this part of the study is based on a bigger and developed research project running for more than 10 years (Galasińska 2009, 2010, forthcoming) we only briefly summarise its methodology. First, all articles regarding post-enlargement migration were picked up from the *Gazeta.pl* portal. Second, readers' comments posted within one week of the publication of every selected article were saved. Then, in order to deal with the vast number of comments we used a data-driven, bottom-up inductive analytical approach. We selected a number of leading themes/categories or macro-topics in an open coding process. A subsequent reading and re-coding of initial categories allowed us to find additional, more detailed sub-themes, up to the point of a saturation of codes. We validated our analytical approach by juxtaposing the findings with interview material collected during an ethnographic project on re-migration (for details see Galasińska, forthcoming). In this text we focus exclusively on comments representing the macro-topic of work and work relations in the United Kingdom and Poland. These posts were found in threads that usually developed out of responses to reports of events, issues

or opinion pieces found on the website and in the main paper. The posts were made over time (2009–2015) but there seems to be little difference in the nature of what was discussed or how. Having selected the macro-topic of work we identified distinctive sub-topics in relation to a work/social remittances nexus using in-depth scrutiny techniques, such as repetitions, analogies and above all similarities and differences (Ryan and Bernard 2003: 89–93). This part of the analytical process allowed us to categorise our pool of data further and to identify ‘typical’ representations of: positive and negative evaluations of work in the UK; an assessment of working practices delivered from both migrant and returnee perspectives; and working while studying.

In what follows, we review the evidence of the role of Polish migrants in the UK labour market before looking at how social media create the basis for the transmission of information and social remittances. We then use the data we have collected to explore some of the issues raised in discussions about the nature of UK workplaces and their relation to workplaces in Poland.

### **UK workplaces and Polish migrant workers**

We have suggested that too often migration is seen as a movement between two static states. In the receiving country this is reflected in the emphasis on the ways in which, at least in the first generation, most migrants get stuck at the bottom of the labour market. But migration is dynamic – the migrant leaves a society in motion and comes to a society in motion. Migrants are in motion themselves as they leave, move, settle and then either return or make their lives in the new society. They also increasingly inhabit transnational spaces supported by improved means of communication. To make sense of this dynamism and the changing patterns that it leads to it is important to analyse the data we have about the evolving patterns of migrant jobs and any variation that exists between migrant groups.

According to the estimates of the Polish Central Statistical Office the stock of Poles abroad rose from one million in 2004 to 2.27 million in 2007. The economic crisis pushed down numbers to 2 million in 2010 only for them to rise again to 2.2 million by 2013. Some 80 per cent of this stock of Poles abroad was to be found in the other EU 27 countries, with the United Kingdom the major destination. The UK’s share of other EU 27 stock of Poles abroad rose from 15 per cent in 2004 to some 30 per cent – in absolute terms a rise from 150 000 in 2004 to 690 000 in 2007. Numbers then fell to 580 000 in 2010 but rose again to 720 000 in 2015 (CSO 2016). The pull of the UK reflects the ease of moving there. The UK, along with Ireland and Sweden, allowed more or less free movement on EU accession. There was also a pre-existing Polish diaspora which, although small (61 000 in 2001), was larger than that of other accession countries. But the biggest attraction was not simply the UK wage differential but the UK economic model, which was generating a high demand for labour and offering more low-skilled, entry-level jobs. This was combined with a willingness on the part of employers to take on migrants and an open attitude to migrants (without minimising real elements of discrimination and notwithstanding the anti-migrant rhetoric in some quarters) in the workplace and society at large.

To get a proper sense of what is involved what we would really need is to undertake a prospective cohort study. A large random sample would be taken of people and then their life courses as migrants tracked over the years. We could then see who migrates, who returns, who stays, who is stuck, who moves sideways and who moves up (Burrell 2010; Frattini 2014; Aziz 2015). But the costs and complexity of such cohort studies make them rare in the social sciences. Instead we have to make do with non-random retrospective cohort studies where small groups are asked about their past. While these can yield valuable insights they suffer from huge problems of selection bias. They are usually based on groups that share a distinctive characteristic, such as the highly skilled (Cieslik 2011), Polish graduates switching (Szewczyk 2014), experiencing downward occupational mobility in the UK (Parutis 2011; Trevena 2011); students; building workers (Datta and Brickell 2009); or those at the very bottom of the labour market. The samples within these groups are then small and

are commonly created for the convenience of the researcher. This obviously poses the problem of how representative any conclusions drawn from them might be.

Building a more adequate statistical framework for analysing the migrant experience therefore depends on the exploitation of larger-scale state-generated data and the researcher should make no apology for this. But even analysis based on state data can founder in the face of the complexity of the migrant experience and not least their role in the labour market. To do this, ideally we need detailed workplace and labour-force data that looks at the status of migrants within the workplace. But this data does not exist in the forms that we would wish. The UK Labour Force Survey is available but with a panel of 60 000 this is not detailed enough to satisfactorily capture the differences between migrant groups from different countries of origin, though it is successfully being used to look at larger groupings (Frattini 2014).

In its absence we have to tease out the pattern of work done by migrants in general in the UK, and Polish migrants in particular, from other types of data. When the large-scale migration of Polish workers to the UK began, a key source for the analysis of its relationship to the labour market was the Worker Registration Scheme (Garapich 2008; Burrell 2009; Drinkwater, Eade, and Garapich 2009; White 2010; Düvell and Garapich 2011). The scheme ended in 2011 but even while it was in place, registration was based on first employment and was also incomplete for a number of reasons. These data therefore miss the issue of any dynamism in the labour market.

There has always been a considerable gap between what migrants intend when they arrive and what they actually do. Historically the migration decision tends to be thought of as temporary but for many it becomes permanent, sometimes without the migrant being fully aware of the longer-term consequences of the decisions that they are making. Louise Ryan (2015) in a recent account quotes one of her female Polish interview subjects as asking herself of her decision to stay in the UK, ‘Whaaaaat! How did that happen?’ But what from the perspective of the individual migrant might seem to be a product of chance and good or bad luck might, at an aggregate level, be revealing of more interesting societal, labour-market and workplace patterns. Such patterns will be the outcome of structures and a degree of agency from the migrants themselves and the ways in which structure and agency interact.

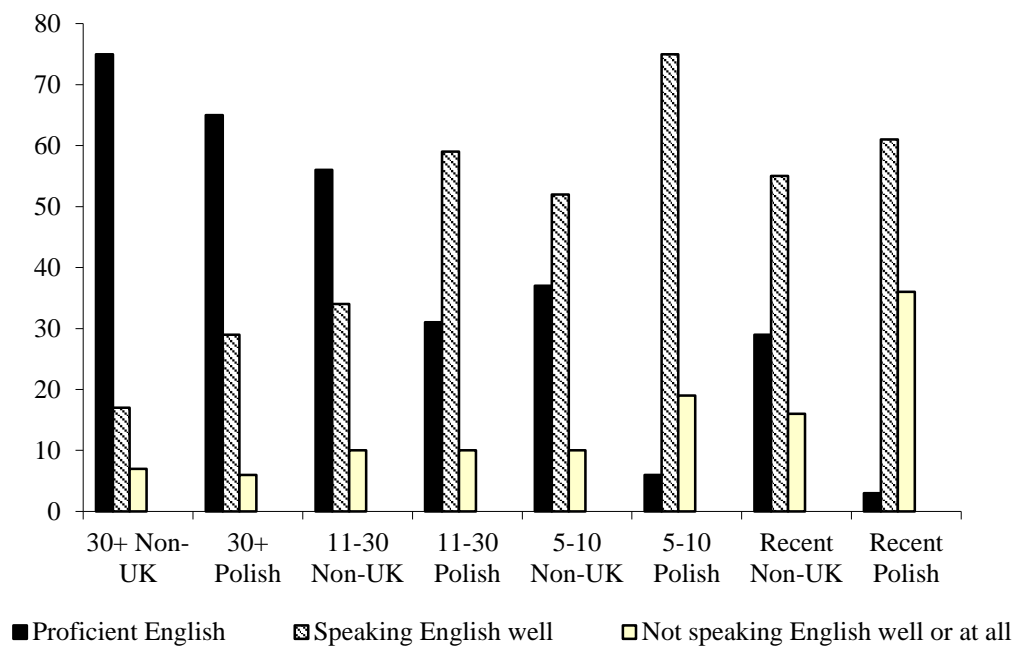
Fortunately, the census in 2011 has provided a mass of alternative data of the stock of Polish migrants, defined as long-term (over a year) migrants to the UK, and based on whether they were Polish born and/or held a Polish passport. These data allow us a better, if still imperfect, sense of what has happened in work terms as Polish migrants have established themselves in their new country.

The broad characteristics of Poles as migrants to the UK in particular need only be briefly sketched here. By the time of the 2011 census the 579 000 Poles in the UK made up 7.7 per cent of the total foreign-born population. Just over 90 per cent of those Polish born had arrived in the last decade compared to 50 per cent of the total foreign born (ONS 2014). These Polish migrants have mainly been young. In gender terms they are roughly 49:51 male/female. Their relative youth and the conditions that they are leaving behind in Poland means that they have uneven work experience when they arrive, though the very act of migration suggests also that they form part of a more dynamic group.

We also know that they are relatively well educated. It is true that as migration has become more ‘mass’ so there has been a decline in the share of Polish migrants with the highest qualifications. But even though Polish qualifications do not equate directly with UK ones, the evidence suggests that the Polish cohort has a relatively good educational level in terms of the formal mapping of qualifications and, some would argue, a better one in terms of certain skills (ONS 2014). More importantly, Polish migrants also appear to be rapid learners especially in the area of language. Many come with some English language skills, however primitive, and, contrary to claims in UK populist discourses about ghettoisation, these seem to improve rapidly with relatively high levels of immersion in UK life. The census data which are the basis for Figure 1, albeit based on self-report,

show that most migrants in general, and Polish migrants in particular, acquire basic language skills that enable them to have broader labour-market opportunities.

**Figure 1. Language proficiency by country of birth and length of residence for those aged three years and over, England and Wales**



Source: Calculated by authors from ONS (2013a) and reference table BD0059.

It is when we turn to the data on employment patterns that more interesting facts emerge. As we might expect, given their relative youth and the importance of work in the migration decision, over 80 per cent of Polish migrants in the last decade who were in the UK on the census date were in work. This compared to overall UK and foreign-national rates of some 60 per cent (ONS 2014). But contrary to what is often claimed about there being a divided labour market for native-born and migrant workers, the UK census confirms that what is interesting about Polish migrants in Britain is the diversity of their workplace experiences.

Diversity of experience is apparent in geographical terms, at the level of sector of employment and occupation. This seems to be in line with suggestions that migrant journeys for some groups are far more diverse than they were in the past. As Jane Hardy has written, while some migrants are employed,

*on the fringes of the labour market... the reality is that CEE migrant workers are central to British and Irish capitalism and directly (or indirectly) employed by some of the largest companies. Although there is no doubt that some employment agencies are run on a semi-criminal basis, others such as Adecco are large transnational corporations themselves (Hardy 2009: 91).*

This has important consequences for the analysis of both economic remittances and the social remittances that we are interested in. A broader range of migrant experiences means that there is a broader basis for information flows and less chance of them being distorted, for good or bad, by less representative experiences.

Let us consider first the geographical distribution of Polish migrants. Table 1 shows the distribution of the population at the census date by region. It distinguishes UK-born, non-UK-born and Polish-born people in the UK using the census data and the distribution of the post-accession cohort in particular.

**Table 1. Regional distribution of the UK, non-UK and Polish-born population in 2011, England and Wales**

Regions of England and Wales	% All	% UK born	% Born outside UK	% Polish born	2004/2010 Polish cohort
East	10.4	10.7	8.6	10.7	11.1
East Midlands	8.1	8.4	6.0	9.2	9.9
London	14.6	10.7	40.0	27.3	23.3
North-East	4.6	5.1	1.7	1.5	1.6
North-West	12.6	13.3	7.7	9.0	9.6
South-East	15.4	15.6	13.9	14.0	14.1
South-West	9.4	10.1	5.4	7.8	8.3
West Midlands	10.0	10.2	8.4	9.1	9.7
Yorkshire	9.4	9.9	6.2	8.3	8.9
Wales	5.5	6.0	2.2	3.1	3.4

Source: ONS (2012a).

As can be seen, London exerts a huge pull on the non-UK born. (It also has a lot of migration investigators who use the local foreign born as their sample.) But its dominance is much less significant for the Polish born and even less so for the most recent cohort. Similarly, while Polish migrants are under-represented in the North-East compared to other non-UK-born they are relatively over-represented in all other regions compared to the non-UK-born as a whole. The geographical spread of the most recent cohort is even broader. In the East of England and the East Midlands the share of Polish migrants is slightly higher than the share of the UK-born population living there. But given that only a fifth of all Polish-born in the UK live and work there, the attention paid to towns like Boston and Peterborough in East Anglia as archetypical examples of destinations for Polish migrants is not helpful (see also Trevena, McGhee, and Heath 2013). It is perhaps time, therefore, to look more carefully at the geographical diversity of Polish migrants in the UK and the variety of their local experiences.

The diversity of work experience of Polish migrants by sector is no less apparent in the census data, belying claims that most migrants are concentrated in particular industries. Table 2 breaks down the distribution of migrants by economic/industry sector and compares the UK-born, Polish-born and those born in the other eight EU accession countries of the 2000s. Because agriculture is such a small employer, the higher share of Polish migrants in agriculture is not significant. As many commentators note, the really big areas of over-representation are manufacturing industry and distribution, hotels and retail. Some 45 per cent of Polish migrants work in these sectors compared to some 30 per cent of the UK-born population. But these sectors are themselves large and diverse. (It would be interesting, for example, to further break down the manufacturing sector.) Moreover, over half of the Polish migrant cohorts do not work in them. Table 2 also shows that the biggest area of relative under-representation is in public administration, education and health where the share of the UK born is 30 per cent and the Polish migrant cohort share some 12 per cent. Given the more specific nature of jobs in this sector and the qualifications needed for them this is hardly surprising. But even so, the 12 per cent of Polish migrants employed there represents a significant number. And the under-representation of Polish migrants here is not a sign of their difficulties in getting 'white-collar jobs'. Interestingly the share of the Polish migrant cohort in banking, finance and insurance is very close to the UK-born share of some 17 per cent.



**Table 2. Distribution of UK-born, Polish-born and other A8-born by economic sector in 2011, England and Wales**

Industry	Country of birth			
	All	UK	Poland	Other A8
All categories: Industry	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
A: Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.5
C: Manufacturing	8.9	9.1	18.5	11.0
B, D, E: Energy and water	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.0
F: Construction	7.7	8.1	9.5	10.9
G, I: Distribution, hotels and restaurants	21.5	21.0	26.6	26.6
H, J: Transport and communications	8.9	8.6	9.7	8.4
K, L, M, N: Financial, real estate, professional and administrative activities	17.2	16.8	16.8	18.7
O, P, Q: Public administration, education and health	28.4	28.8	12.3	16.8
R, S, T, U: Other	5.0	5.0	4.0	5.1

Source: ONS (2013b); ONS (2012) Census Table CT0076.

**Table 3. Occupational distribution of UK-born and Polish-born in 2011, England and Wales**

Occupation	Country of birth			
	All	UK	Polish	Other A8
All categories: Occupation	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	10.8	10.9	4.4	6.4
2. Professional occupations	17.4	16.7	6.5	10.4
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	12.7	13.0	5.4	7.1
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	11.4	12.0	5.7	6.9
5. Skilled trades occupations	11.5	11.9	15.9	13.9
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations	9.4	9.4	7.9	9.6
7. Sales and customer service occupations	8.4	8.7	4.8	5.1
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	7.2	7.0	17.9	11.8
9. Elementary occupations	11.2	10.3	31.5	28.7

Source: ONS (2013b), ONS (2012) Census Table CT0076.

Table 3 shows the census data on occupations. Because most Polish migrants are recent arrivals in the UK and start by doing entry-level work in the labour market then, even allowing for a degree of occupational mobility, we might expect Polish migrants to be more concentrated in lower-income and lower-status jobs within the different sectors. This table shows that this is so with nearly half of all Polish migrants in elementary occupations or working as process, plant and machine operatives. But again the other half of the Polish migrant workforce has a much more diverse occupational distribution with over 10 per cent of this group to be found in the higher levels. Nor does it seem true that, as some have suggested, Polish migrants in the service sector are to be found primarily in backroom functions. While they might initially find jobs there, rapid language acquisition creates the basis for a much more diverse occupational pattern where a person might progress in a UK restaurant or pub and move from, say, working in a kitchen to bar and waiting work to some type of junior management. The occupational census data therefore is suggestive of significant movement of some

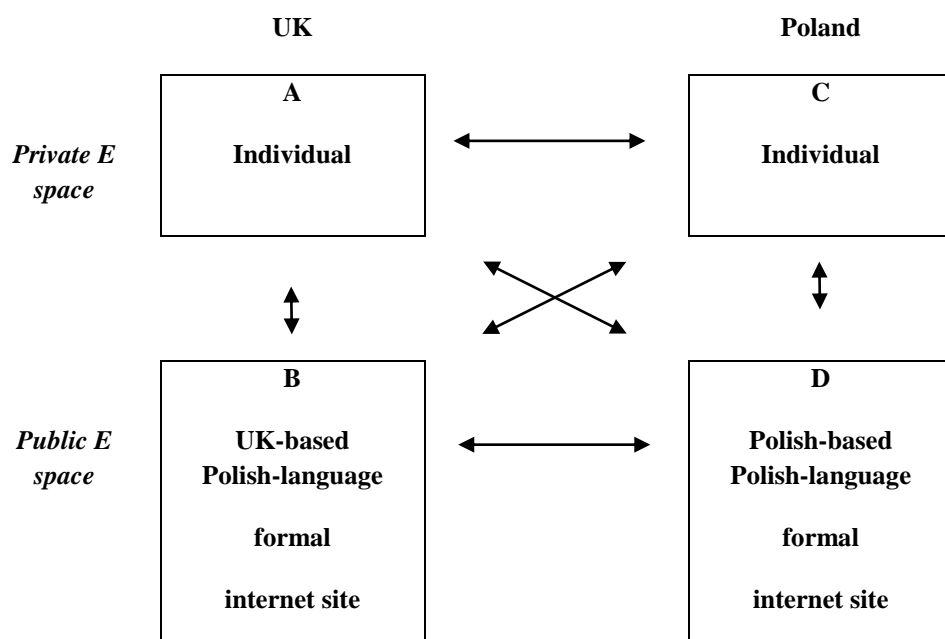
migrants from the first jobs that they get, and it supports some of the recent discussion suggesting that possibilities of moving both up and sideways exist and that some are able to take advantage of them (Frattini 2014; Aziz 2015).

In summary, if the UK workforce is diverse and only a minority of workplaces employ migrants, Polish migrants since 2004 have still experienced a comparatively broad range of geographical locations, industries and occupations. Our data also suggest some significant mobility within the UK. While some Polish migrants have undeniably got stuck at the bottom of the labour market the overall pattern suggests a degree of movement within a relatively short period in terms of the migrant life course. It is important then to build on some of the insights that can be found in the literature that is beginning to pose the issue of migration in more dynamic terms. It is not just that the experience of Polish migrants varies – it seems to vary more than ‘the migrant average’ in systematic and dynamic ways that are then reflected in the specific geographical, sector and occupational patterns of work. But this is important too in developing any discussion of how social remittances relate to the workplace and work. Although individual migrants have specific and narrower experiences in workplace terms, it may be that the breadth of the workplace experiences of the Polish cohort as a whole is also important.

### **What’s going on – migrant discussion**

Migrants have always struggled to maintain some contact with their families and places of origin, trying to find ways to send back money and information as well as to maintain emotional ties. Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) in their classic study of the Polish peasant depended in part on the analysis of letters which testified to continuing contact and embodied elements of social remittance transfer a century ago. But the advent of electronic communication has changed the forms, frequency, intensity, and immediacy of contact, allowing much closer relationships to be maintained. There is a growing discussion of the ways in which different migrant communities use cyberspace to maintain contact and the different types of economic and social remittances that can be transferred through it (for example, Bernal 2005; Panagakos and Horst 2006; Dimenescu 2008). White and Ryan (2008) investigated Polish migrants’ use of the internet in networking within the UK and Janta and Ladkin (2013) have looked at its role in job hunting for migrants in the Polish case. On the other hand, Siara (2009) has explored Polish-UK migrant gender identity and ethnicity as manifested on internet forum discussions while Galasińska (2010) scrutinised such forums in order to monitor transnational dialog between migrants and those who stayed behind (see also Galasińska and Horolets 2012).

To make sense of the different forms of electronic communication in Figure 1 we divide communicators into individuals using direct communication and indirect communication through formal websites, whether run by organisations or enthusiastic amateurs. The larger part of communication takes place in the private E space between individual and individual (A–C), both within each country and between the UK and Poland, through the exchange of e-mails, texts, pictures, or face-to-face contact using Skype, Google hangouts, etc. In the public E space, formal sites have also grown and it is these that we are interested in. Some of these have been created by organisations, including more traditional media outlets, others operate on a less professional and more intermittent basis.

**Figure 2. Polish-language electronic information flows for potential social remittances**

While those in Poland who speak English have access to both Polish- and English- language websites, we are especially interested in the communication flows in Polish on Polish-run websites. As Figure 2 shows, these websites can be UK based. The number of Polish websites in the UK seems to have risen and fallen as the interest of those running them changes. But a significant core has been sustained because they started with or gained a commercial basis or because of the continued commitment of some individuals (Fitzgerald and Hardy 2010; Fitzgerald *et al.* 2012). In this article we are interested in those communications that take place in the public E space between individuals and the formal Polish-based and Polish-language site of *gazeta.pl*, along the A–D axis as well as the C–D axis. It is to these in relation to work themes that we now turn.

#### *Positive images of work in the UK*

Our first examples stress the positive experience of work in the UK (see also Galasińska and Kozłowska 2009; Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski 2009: 203–204). In particular, website users praise British managers as more humane than their Polish counterparts. Comments 1 to 5 present a comparative world in which work in the UK appears relatively stress-free and workers feel appreciated by their bosses. Interestingly, financial gratitude is only mentioned at the end of these examples.

**Comment 1** *After two years of contact with the ‘West’ I now simply see the cultural differences, and as can be seen nowadays, work is an important thing. People there live during work and don’t just rush, when they go on break they eat lunch instead of gulping it down because the break is ending (not including foreigners), relationships with bosses are interpersonal rather than a constant struggle. I won’t mention the ratio of income versus expenditure because that obviously doesn’t require a comment.*

**Comment 2** *My husband works in his own field and has much more room for manoeuvre than in Poland where someone was constantly hanging over him, his boss is humane, he’ll chat with him, ask what’s wrong*

*when he sees that my husband has a sour face, offers help, etc. He's valued and hears that he's a valuable worker and that the company appreciates him at least several times a month. This also translates into finances.*

**Comment 3** *Some more about the local bosses:*

*You address them by name (instead of bowing)*

*You can totally have a laugh with them and talk about things outside of work (instead of curling up in a ball behind your desk out of fear)*

*They show interest in you as a person (e.g. ask about your plans for the weekend)*

*They understand that first and foremost you are a person, and then an employee (instead of shouting like what is this meant to be, your child is ill???)*

*Birthday or other holiday celebrations are obligatory (cards, group outings to the restaurant/pub)*

*They really value your merits and reward them, but they make sure you do the work they expect from you*

*An employee's rights are very broad (e.g. a few formal warnings before they fire you)*

*A lunch break is always a lunch break!!!*

*Etc., etc., You could recite these for an infinite amount of time.*

If Giddens's broad definition of work as human activity 'which has as its objective the production of goods and services that cater for human needs' (2001: 376) is taken as a benchmark for analysis of these first comments, then one could argue that Polish migrants live and work in the UK in a sort of parallel universe. As these comments show, the main appreciation of the British workplace is related to an interpersonal relationship with managers. All three forum users praise their bosses for their soft managerial skills, their ability to not impose hierarchy as well as the treatment of employees as human beings rather than as workers only. Polish migrants in the UK tend to mention work–life balance as one of the main factors of satisfaction from their migratory experience (Galasińska 2010). The examples show too that work–life balance, with a stress on the 'life' part of that opposition, is achievable also within a workplace itself. That is depicted for example by commentators 1 and 3, who touch on the importance of lunch breaks (see also Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski 2009: 204).

Interestingly, there is nothing in these comments to suggest either the sector or the occupation of the authors, so one could argue that such conditions at work might be more associated with high-skilled/office jobs. However, as the next example shows, more stress-free working conditions and respectful treatment by managers are seen as common also at the bottom of an employment ladder.

**Comment 4** *I was in England for about 2 years... my return to the motherland was planned... how long can you take as a proverbial dish washer, although I generally liked that job. There was no rush, no stress, respect for the employee, etc. Depression hit after returning to Poland.*

The ending of Comment 4 is also revealing with its story that return to Poland and confrontation with the life there, (probably) including experience in the Polish workplace, was depressing. No details are given as to what caused such feelings, but the next comments (by a different forum user) shed some light on this. This example is constructed almost as a mirror image to the previous one. First we learn that depression was a part and parcel of work in Poland and that both respect and job satisfaction had been achieved *after* migration to the UK. Second, while the author of Comment 4 worked in the UK in a low-status job that gave him satisfaction, the presumed high status of a doctor working in the Polish health service (Comment 5) not only did not guarantee satisfaction, but made him depressed.

**Comment 5** *I worked in Poland after having finished studying medicine for almost 5 years. In the last two years I worked two full-time jobs at about 250–300h a month to make ends meet. Day in, day out, night shifts, and a tram in the morning to the next job. And that’s how I worked myself to clinical depression. Last year, after starting treatment on the brink of complete exhaustion, I made the difficult and risky decision to leave the country. I left my friends, both jobs, and I put everything on the line. Within less than a year in Great Britain I got a managerial position in an excellent pharmaceutical company with little effort. I get paid well, live in a beautiful town, I’m happy and smile to myself about going to work every morning. It wasn’t easy – I arrived here with two suitcases, but I gritted my teeth and it worked out! Exactly a year ago, the position I was in was the polar opposite. My country trampled over me, led me to the brink of frustration and mental breakdown. Here, I hear warm words every day, I’m respected and met with a smile. Nothing to add, nothing to take back. I really recommend it! Learn a new language – English, German, Swedish, and run away, because you can live a normal life. Any how I’m not the first to have said this.*

Since a cynic might see such comments as advertisements for work in the UK we have quoted several comments to reflect what is being said. While the migrant in the last comment explicitly defines the UK work experience as ‘normal’ to the detriment of that in Poland (see Galasińska and Kozłowska 2009), it is true that all these comments suggest the positive UK work experience. This is associated less with formal rules than with the wider workplace culture and human relationships. Interestingly, however, none offer speculations as to why these differences exist so that while the idea of an alternative work culture is posed, for readers in Poland ideas of how it might be achieved there, or was achieved in the UK, are not presented. Indeed, the last commentator, with their recommendation to migrate, seems to pessimistically imply the difficulties of change in Poland.

This positive appreciation of the experience of the UK workplace is at variance with the popular view which sees migrants as stuck at the bottom of the labour market. It makes more sense in terms of the range of migrant work experiences that we discussed earlier. Our third comment also shows a commentator alluding to the way that what goes on in the workplace can also open the door to a wider range of information beyond the workplace. But as Comment 4 shows, even work in the low-status position of a dish washer can be seen to be better in the UK than such a job would be in Poland. But such a positive appreciation of the UK workplace is also at variance with the view that neo-liberal policies and migration have undermined conditions for the UK workforce. Such comments might prompt us to ask what is real and what imagined about the work experience of both native and foreign-born workers in the UK. But since our focus is here on what is transmitted to Poland we now turn to comments that describe how the migrant work experience negatively conditions the experience of work in Poland if migrants return.

#### *Negative description of work in Poland upon return*

The website we researched also offered voices of returning migrants who describe their experiences of work in Poland upon their return from the UK. The negative comments of the low-status dish washer cited earlier suggesting that *depression hit after returning to Poland* are developed in the narratives of other contributors.

**Comment 6** *At work – not appreciating so-called ‘soft skills’, lack of teamwork skills, negotiation, compromise, hierarchy and the demand to be available 24/7 (I know from stories), a lack of rules such as ‘work–life balance’ and ‘a rested employee is a better employee’.*

**Comment 7** *I came back after 6 years in the UK. Lots of things annoy me.*

1. *I can't go to work on a Sunday/public holiday for double the pay – in case I wanted to amend my budget :-)*
2. *The only thing that matters at work is the short term, for today, if I were to serve a client who didn't buy anything that day, but came back later because he was satisfied with the professional service – it wouldn't matter. If 'Kowalski' doesn't buy anything, then ignore him and onto the next one!! In the UK EVERY client is important!!!*

These comments reinforce the idea that workplaces in Poland are pressured ones but that this pressure is often counter-productive. Again there is no consideration of why this is so. Our commentators simply suggest what is missing and some of the issues faced by workers in Poland. Given the incorporation of 'Western human resource management' rhetoric into discourses in the transition countries as the European Union has expanded, as well as the role of foreign direct investment in allegedly upgrading and changing the workplace, this stress on the lack of 'softer skills' might seem redundant. But both outgoing and returning migrants suggest more limited evidence of changes in practice in Poland. Existing study of forum discussions suggests that non-migrants tend to agree with migrants when comparing cultural differences between two countries and that, more often than not, they are united in mutual complaints about their home country (Galasińska 2010). Although crucially for the social remittances argument those who send back information cannot control how it is received, the reader would certainly get a strongly critical view of the Polish workplace in comparative terms.

#### *The Polish manager abroad*

This broader message can be reinforced in other ways. Some comments discuss what happens when a manager from Poland moves to the UK to manage workers, especially Polish workers. The same sense that the Polish manager lacks crucial skills and compounds his or her problems occurs. One comment sets out more fully what this might mean:

**Comment 8** *Usually Poles work well – newcomers work too fast – but that isn't a reason to fight – all you need to do is explain to the new person that there's a different work culture here. When they brought over a new manager from Poland he started to rush people and get in the way of work, as well as talking to us in Polish in front of the others. So I explained to him in English that, sorry but this isn't Poland, and just because he finished a year of studies at a so-called Marketing school in Poland that doesn't mean that there aren't other Poles working here in normal positions, with normal University degrees, and that he was getting in the way. I had to explain to him that he can't harass people and boss them about in his Polish style, because this is England, and sorry but you have to show respect to your employees and have to be capable of something and not get in the way of work, and if he doesn't like it then he'd better go back to Poland. The Polish manager complained a lot, he didn't like the English food but unfortunately instead of cooking for himself, he just bragged about how his wife cooked for him in Poland (despite the fact that in the area there were plenty of worldwide products available, and you could cook yourself anything you wished). After a month of complaining he returned to Poland, and the senior manager told us that he could see that we were doing just fine by ourselves (the English workers made complaints about the Polish manager, and also said he was treating the Poles badly), and in reward we weren't going to have a line manager so we could calmly get on with our work the way we already were.*

Responding to this another contributor added brutally:

**Comment 9** *I wouldn't be surprised at all if the person in charge of the change was also a Pole wanting to prove himself to his English bosses...*

Data collected by researchers of post-enlargement migrations suggest that Polish migrants tend both to keep close contact with fellow migrants and to use networking and socialising for different purposes, but on the other hand they want to distance themselves from other Poles claiming that relationship between Poles abroad is ridden by jealousy and mistrust, as in the famous Polish saying ‘*Polak Polakowi wilkiem*’ (‘a Pole is like a wolf to another Pole’). That is particularly common in narratives about the workplace, where Poles tend to compete among themselves in order to impress their British managers and to gain some ‘points’ towards their possible promotion – an echo of this is depicted in Comment 9.

However, what we find even more interesting for a social remittance argument in the above exchange is a ‘counter-narrative’ (Andrews 2004: 2) of that popular belief. In the first sentence of Comment 8 the author elegantly, competently and with the sharp eye of a sociologically aware observer explains the social dynamics of the workplace, especially in relation to newcomers. He uses the verb ‘explain’ several times in his account as a means of passing his knowledge of different working practices to both newcomers and new Polish managers in the UK. This comment is an interesting example of how social remittances are circulated on a dual level, first within the country of residence, and at the same time from the country of residence to the home country in the form of a reader comment on this newspaper website forum.

So far the UK workplace has been described and accessed by forum commentators with enthusiasm and in a very optimistic manner, with the modest exception of the Polish manager example. But even this story ended well for Polish migrant workers. It would be naïve to think that the very positive picture of work and working practices presented on the forum is the only one there. The forum also offers a more complex representation of that topic.

#### *Negative images of work in the UK*

Some website users share their concerns about working conditions in the UK. They mention mainly problems related to ‘zero-hours contracts’, health and safety, and workers’ rights. Our first example reflects a degree of anger about conditions in a workplace and the poor local management response.

**Comment 10** *The incident described in the article doesn't surprise me at all. I personally know the case of a Polish woman who had an accident at work because the work she was doing was too physically demanding for her, and in breach of health and safety regulations in Great Britain. She ended up in hospital after the accident and didn't work for a few weeks by doctor's orders. The company she works at didn't even document the incident – her bosses are treating the accident as if it was her own, private affair, and the fact that it happened during work doesn't make any difference to them.*

*In the context of these events, Cameron's [the British Prime Minister at the time] remarks are like Satan's laughter over the coffins that our countrymen will be returning in after they've completely lost their strength working to build the might of the United Kingdom. Or maybe not so Great Britain but rather Great Bullshit?*

If the circumstances were as described, then the failure to record an accident would be a potentially serious issue in the UK, though how much actual under-recording of workplace accidents takes place is debated by specialists. But while the comment reflects anger, its failure to refer to any means of challenging the company's deficiencies also implies a degree of powerlessness. This suggests the lack of active agency or the ‘giving up’ attitude on the part of some groups of Polish migrants (and also returnees) found in other studies. In their

studies of forum discussion by returnees Galasiński and Galasińska (2010) argued that a ‘giving up’ attitude is the result of adapting to Polish culture upon return. As social, cultural and economic change in post-communist Poland have a different pace and different dynamics, some remnants of the communist ‘let it be’ culture prevail, and they overwhelm potential new social practices of returnees. Karolak (2016) discovered similar ways of coping with reality in his study based on returnees’ biographical narratives. For the social remittance argument this comment is important as a potential instruction for those who would like to learn from others’ mistakes. It is also crucial in understanding that some social remittances, even though transmitted and circulated, could be lost or that they might be not acquired at all.

Our next comment, too, reflects anger about the work situation of low-paid staff in general, and migrant workers in particular. Sports Direct is a giant UK sports clothing retailer which has been at the centre of controversies in the retail sector over working conditions and contracts for its, primarily young, staff.

**Comment 11** *Long time ago I tried to get a job at Sports Direct in London and they also offered me a so-called ‘zero-hours’ contract. Thank God I found a cool job somewhere else in the meantime, however even today I get angry when I remember their terms. No certainty as to tomorrow, maybe you’ll get more hours, maybe not... and when you go shopping you wonder whether, if you buy these shoes today you’ll die of hunger in a month because of them... The life of an immigrant is difficult in the beginning...*

But hostile though this comment is, the writer also gives the story a more positive tone in recognising that such jobs may only be entry-level ones for some migrants. The uncertainty that exists for those workers caught at the bottom of the labour market in precarious jobs is also brought out in the next comment.

**Comment 12** *I study and work in the UK. My contract guarantees 4h of work minimum in a week, providing that one is available to come into work almost 24/7. Work timetables are posted on Sunday for the next Monday, and each week is different with regards to the hours and days. My manager often calls me to come into work in an hour because he planned the timetable wrong... I work as a waitress and all of the contracts I was offered had the same characteristics. I appreciate that thanks to my job I can financially support myself. But it’s a very stressful situation – organising my private life, hobbies, illnesses, credit, or planning anything becomes very complicated. My friends (those who aren’t students) could probably go back to Poland instead of complaining, but I’m not surprised that they just accept what they have and don’t want to start ‘their life’ again.*

But the ambiguities created by the structure of the UK labour market are set out more fully by another commentator who explains the decentralised nature of workplace rules with some confidence.

**Comment 13** *Britons have probably the most flexible job market in the EU. Even job contracts are completely flexible, i.e. the time periods for giving in your notice or calling in sick are agreed upon by both sides and not through laws. The only things that British laws guarantee are the right to minimum wage and holiday time off work. The rest is an agreement between both sides, e.g. some companies pay you during your breaks, others don’t, similarly with sick leave – some do and some don’t. And zero hours or a job through a temp agency is just maximal flexibility. But that’s why 2 million workers from the East settled down in the UK. If laws relating to work were more rigid, e.g. a lot of bureaucracy involved in hiring people, or if you had to give in your notice a long time in advance, then hardly anyone would find a job in the Isles.*



Both extracts 12 and 13, although capturing quite depressing and negative aspects of work practices, conditions and regulations in the UK, also show a very detailed knowledge of the system itself. This is evidence of learning through work and even the bleak picture of employment law gives some interesting information regarding the perceived lack of bureaucracy and the potential ease of movement across the job market in the UK. That is certainly important knowledge for (potential) newcomers who want to find a job in the British job market.

#### *The downside of study as introduction to work in the UK*

It is often argued that migration for educational purposes is especially useful and educational experiences can form a positive part of social remittance flows. This argument obviously appeals to those in education itself, and the relative ease of using students as a research group either while they are studying or in their subsequent jobs also creates a situation where attention is given to the educational experience as especially formative in terms of social remittances (Grabowska-Lusińska 2012). It is therefore interesting to find some comments which suggest a more sceptical approach.

**Comment 14** *I also completed University in the UK. I have to say it was a complete bust. The level of education was tragic. After finishing your studies you can take that piece of paper and wipe your you-know-what with it. And that's because there's no link between education and work in England. You finish university and no one hires you because you don't have any experience. But no one will give you experience because it's cheaper to hire an immigrant who already has experience and will toil morning to night for half the price. So you can shove your diploma where the sun doesn't shine. 70 per cent of students in the UK will never find a job in their field, while the average amount of time it takes to pay off loans is 30 years. If anything then only private vocational courses but never university, not in a million years.*

While this comment will hardly endear the commentator to those who stress and sell the value of high education mobility, it does (even if unfair), happily point for us to the possibly greater value of direct work experience as a creator of some types of social remittances than formal higher education.

#### *Rejecting the host society*

As we stressed earlier, the context of the comments that we are recording here was an often heated and polarised debate. We should, therefore, also recognise that, although not typical, some of the comments by migrants did reinforce more hostile local attitudes.

**Comment 15** *I worked and studied in England and I think it's more of a third world country than a European one. The moronic (Anglo-Saxon) society thinks the world revolves around it. It's difficult to get promoted there because they prefer their own mentally handicapped faggots.*

Here not only is 'England' counterposed to 'Europe' (*sic!*), it is diminished as an economic model (it is 'more of a third world country'), and attacked for arrogance. But beyond this, what is sometimes called social liberalism and policies of equal rights in the workplace are now redefined as discriminatory against able-bodied heterosexuals (males?). Here the workplace experience is used to reinforce the traditional tropes in the discourses of the right. As we know, social remittances do not have to be 'positive' and the information and emotions transmitted about the workplace speak to another debate that has divided people in Poland (Binnie and Klesse 2013). But, ironically, the commentator tries to legitimise their position not by reference to a local

‘Polish’ norm but as part of a sounder alleged ‘European’ norm, showing how the migration experience encourages even those who are hostile to perhaps unconsciously recast arguments in a wider form.

## Conclusion

The aim of our paper has been to make a case for incorporating a greater concern with the workplace in the discussion of social remittances. Thus we have explored two methodologically different, but mutually complementary sets of data, which have allowed us to contextualise a form of social remittance discussion both through statistical investigation and qualitative inquiry into bottom-up discourses of the public sphere. We have argued that to fully appreciate such discussions we first need to know who the migrants are and where they work. To this end we have set out the broad structure of the experience of migrant workers from Poland in the UK as it has emerged from recent UK census data, showing that this is far wider than is often appreciated. As these workers get jobs and build careers so their experience becomes more varied. Their successes and failures can then be fed back as social remittances in a variety of ways. Exploring virtual social practices, we have drawn on illustrative comments made about the migrant work experience in the United Kingdom on an internet forum. Focusing on the readers’ debate on the online version of *gazeta.pl* we discovered that both migrants and returnees willingly, readily and without prompting want to share their knowledge on British workplaces. Thus we consider readers’ comments as another channel for a spontaneous transmission of social remittances.

The qualitative thematic analysis shows the broad experiences of work which influence internet users, and this supports our findings of a wide distribution of Poles in the UK labour market. There is evidence in our discursive data of a broad evaluation of work culture (both positive and negative) as well as knowledge of legal guidelines in relation to work. Such knowledge is shared by migrants (and returnees) both transnationally as well as within the country of residence. This demonstrates the complexities of the direction as well as the dynamism of flows of social remittances with regard to work. However, evidence of how all this is received is less clear. There are some instances of engagement in direct exchanges between forum users in our material, but the regimes and practices of participation and comment did not allow us to draw definitive conclusions. But, as we discussed in the analytical part, a comparison of our findings with existing scholarship allows us to be cautiously optimistic that sent information is received. The issue of how it is (or might be) comprehended and/or used by a potential recipient is a problem in need of more thorough investigation in the future.

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# Social Remittances and Migration (Sub-)Cultures in Contemporary Poland

Anne White\*

*The article discusses how to research the impact of migration on social change in sending countries, without using a development studies framework. It argues for greater attention to the lives of ‘stayers’. A comprehensive approach to migration impact should begin by using mainstream sociological research to identify overall social trends in the origin country, before considering migration as one determinant of change. The case study is social remittances in contemporary Poland. Social remittances are understood to include not just foreign ideas, but also those resulting from migrants’ reflections on their own changing lives. One way to investigate how such social remittances ‘scale up’ to create cultural change is to consider the meso-level of regional migration culture. Taking the example of changing gender roles, I discuss Polish sociological and migration scholarship before presenting my own quantitative and qualitative data on stayers’ opinions about maternal migration. I show how stayers in regions with high levels of migration can become persuaded to condone maternal behaviour which is at odds with traditional views on gender roles and the importance of the extended family. Migration cultures are, however, not so visible in other parts of Poland or in Polish cities. The final part of the article employs the concept of migration sub-cultures – pockets of migration exposure and expertise among particular social groups. Examining the case of Wrocław, a prosperous city which might appear to be untouched by migration influences, I argue that such sub-cultures are probably more prevalent than might be assumed.*

*Keywords: social change; social remittances; migration culture; stayers; gender*

## Introduction

The aim of this article is to suggest new ways of investigating the impact of migration on sending societies. My purpose is not to identify the scale of social remitting or measure the impact of migration *vis-à-vis* other determinants of social change. Instead, ‘social remittances’ is used as a term which focuses our attention on the ways in which sending societies are affected by migration, intertwined with other influences. I argue that migration scholars and mainstream sociologists need to collaborate to create this composite picture. I further suggest that general cultural changes in the sending country can be studied in the context of migration cultures which develop in particular regions. Social remittances can be considered, in a narrow sense, as ideas brought back to Society A from Society B, e.g. British ways of doing things which take hold in Poland. By contrast, this article is more concerned with ideas brought back from migrants moving within their own circles in the

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destination country, e.g. Polish ways of doing things in the UK, which take hold in Poland. Migrants often lead rather isolated lives while they are abroad and may lack much direct knowledge of what life is ‘really’ like for Society B, the majority population of the foreign country, about whom they have instead a range of myths and preconceptions (see e.g. Horolets and Kozłowska 2012). However, migrants are well aware of the changes in their own way of life while they are abroad, and discuss these changes with their contacts in the sending society. In the introduction to their special issue on social remittances, Boccagni and Decimo (2013: 4) refer to this type of remittance as ‘the discursive representations of migrant life which, through a cross-border flow of comments, narratives and gossips, make collectively sense of individual mobility’.

My article begins by discussing shortcomings of current frameworks for understanding migration impact and argues for an approach which focuses more on the already changing lives of ‘stayers’ in the sending country. The next section examines evidence of social change in Poland specifically, based on both quantitative and qualitative data. It considers how to link this evidence to data about social remittances. These are generally considered to be local phenomena, rather than national ones. Levitt (1998: 926) states that social remittances are ‘local-level’ forms of diffusion. The puzzle is therefore to understand the links between small-scale changes in views and habits which may be occurring as a result of migration and the evidence of wider cultural change captured by Polish national surveys, change which has many different causes.

One way to bridge this gap is to consider the meso-level of the region, not necessarily in the sense of the formal sub-national administrative unit or *województwo*. The paper considers the concept of migration cultures, which can be seen to exist in some Polish regions such as Podlasie or Podkarpacie, with traditionally high volumes of migration, where local residents live within transnational social fields spanning Europe and beyond.

The terms ‘migration culture’, or the interchangeable ‘culture of migration’, have different interpretations (e.g. Elrick 2008; Garapich 2013; Horváth 2008; Kandel and Massey 2002; White 2011). Here, I use the phrase to refer to the meso-level (Cohen and Sirkeci 2011) and to encompass regional norms about who should migrate, why, how and where; sets of meanings attributed to migration; and the assumption that international migration is an appropriate and predictable livelihood strategy for many people. For example: a fundamental aspect of migration culture in some parts of post-communist Europe is the re-conceptualisation of proximity and distance which results simultaneously from reduced possibilities for rural inhabitants to commute to work in cities (as they did before 1989) and a sense that it is ‘easier’ to work abroad. This trend has been noted by anthropologists researching life in Bulgarian and Romanian ‘global villages’ (Duijzings ed. 2013; Horváth 2008: 783), whose inhabitants feel disconnected from cities or the national state but close to international destinations (Creed 2013: 62). I found exactly the same in my own research in Poland.

Cultures in the sense of conventions about why and how to migrate intertwine with other ideas brought back from abroad. Social remittances narrowly understood as adopting and perhaps also transmitting new ideas about how to behave and think on specific topics unconnected to migration (e.g. focusing leisure time on the nuclear rather than the extended family, wearing tattoos, accepting homosexuality as normal) are hard to separate from a more general pattern of change in which living and working abroad are accepted by many people in high-migration regions as part of the fabric of everyday life.

Migration cultures are, however, not so visible in other parts of Poland or in Polish cities. The final part of the article therefore discusses the channels and impact of migration in parts of Poland where the impact of migration is even harder to discern. It employs the concept of migration sub-cultures – pockets of migration exposure and expertise among particular social groups in parts of Poland where the impact of migration is not in general so obvious and clear-cut – and argues that such sub-cultures are more prevalent than might be assumed.

## Methodology

The focus of the article is mostly theoretical. It is an argument for new avenues of research rather than a report on a specific research project. However, in addition to recent Polish sociological literature, it draws to a limited extent on empirical research which I conducted in Poland between 2007 and 2015, particularly the 2007–2009 research for my book *Polish Families and Migration Since EU Accession* (White 2011), which investigated why an increasing number of parents were moving to Western Europe with their children. The final part of the article uses ethnographic material from my small project in the city of Wrocław in 2015. My impressions of migration cultures are also derived from 45 additional interviews with migrants in the UK (for my book and a project on return migration) and weekly conversations since 2008 with adult Poles from a range of locations in Poland, to whom I teach English at a Polish Saturday school in Bath.

Migration cultures, in the sense of attitudes and opinions about migration, could be investigated by means of regional level opinion polls, although I am not aware that this has been done, except for a poll which I commissioned in 2008 in Podkarpackie region in the south-eastern corner of Poland. At the time the area had one of the highest volumes of emigration in Poland. A total of 1 101 adult residents of Podkarpackie region (except the only city, Rzeszów) were interviewed about their views on parental migration with and without children. I complemented the survey findings with 82 in-depth interviews of stayers, mothers without higher education. My pilot research in 2007 (which helped me frame the survey questions) included nine interviews with women in small towns and villages in western Poland (Wielkopolska). It was apparent, however, that most interviewees were not well-informed about local migration trends and did not have a sense that there was any kind of local opinion with regard to migration. Quite the reverse situation obtained in the eastern towns of Elk and Suwałki, where I completed the pilot survey with a further nine interviews, and this informed my decision to conduct the main part of the research in similar towns with strong migration cultures, Grajewo (Podlasie) and Sanok (Podkarpacie), in 2008–2009. I also carried out 33 interviews in the UK. All my interviews adopted a livelihood strategy approach, discussing the different migration and other livelihood options available to local people, in the context of what was culturally acceptable. I also interviewed key informants such as job centre employees, head teachers and journalists, and scanned the local media (for the most part unsuccessfully) for migration stories.

Limitations of the research included the fact that my in-depth interviews for the study on family migration were conducted only with working-class women, and that I did not conduct research on migration cultures in cities, although cities are much harder to research ethnographically. This prompted my decision to conduct fieldwork in Wrocław in August–September 2015.

The research in Wrocław included interviews (on which I have not drawn in this article), but also conversations with key informants such as local council officials and teachers and with people I encountered working in shops, as receptionists, distributing flyers on the street, etc., I also gathered a range of written material about social change in the city. My purpose was to discover how and why local people thought that life for ordinary people was changing, without prompting for reflections about the impact of migration, since I was curious to see whether my informants considered migration to be a source of change. If I asked about migration at all, it was late in the conversation. This was a pilot project, lasting only a month. However, it provided sufficient evidence for me to at least tentatively back up the arguments about migration sub-cultures developed at the end of this article.



### **Focusing on stayers to study the impact of migration: an inside-out approach**

The mobility of EU citizens is central to the EU project, and should enhance the intercultural competence of citizens across the EU (Xuereb 2011) as well as bringing economic benefits. However, the full effects of mobility on societies of sending countries remain unclear. The impact of mobility on receiving countries is reasonably well documented and sits within a larger literature about immigration to traditional migrant destinations. Less research is conducted about the impact on EU sending countries, and such research as exists is often narrow in scope, tending to have an economic focus and/or discuss social problems (e.g. Bêlorgey, Garbe-Emden, Horstmann, Kuhn, Stubbs and Vogel 2012; OECD 2014; Piperno 2012; Thaut 2009).

Research on EU countries is handicapped by the fact that most literature on sending countries, worldwide, focuses on the ‘migration–development nexus’ (e.g. de Haas 2010; Kapur 2010). Even the standard and otherwise outstanding textbook on migration frames migration’s impact on sending countries wholly in terms of development (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014: 55). The standard sending-country literature has aimed to understand countries like Morocco and India, rather than developed post-communist countries within the EU. The issue of whether migration is good for development is only partly applicable to EU member-states (*how* applicable being dependent on how ‘development’ is defined). To concentrate on development risks overstating the differences between sending and receiving societies in Eastern and Western Europe, both of which have ‘very high’ Human Development Indices. It can also obscure aspects of migration impact other than the impact of migration for education or employment. These include, for example, migration for family reunification, or in pursuit of adventure and new lifestyles.

Finally, the developmental lens promotes normativity. Most analysis globally (as summed up, for example, in Newland 2013) and inside the EU is organised within a framework of ‘costs’ versus ‘benefits’. One unfortunate consequence of this is that phenomena which cannot clearly be labelled ‘bad’ or ‘good’ are missed from view. This is not to deny that migration impact has policy implications: both costs and benefits are real. However, even insofar as scholars should be interested in policy implications, using a normative framework to analyse the phenomenon still remains dangerous, since it runs the risk of exaggeration, for example regarding the supposed abandonment of children by parents working abroad. It promotes exploitation of migration problems by unscrupulous politicians, and precludes the adoption of other conceptual frameworks which might be more helpful for understanding the subject matter in its entirety. More comprehensive and nuanced knowledge would be more helpful for framing policy objectives.

What new frameworks could be adopted to achieve such comprehensiveness and nuance? Broadly speaking, existing scholarship studies absences and ties. Gaps in the sending country include depopulation, brain/brawn drain (where highly skilled or strong young workers emigrate) and care drain (where migrants leave dependent family members for whom they have caring responsibilities). Increasingly, however, scholars see impact in terms of the ties established between receiving and sending countries. These include economic remittances, ‘brain circulation’ as migrants return after improving skills abroad, or caring ‘at a distance’ within transnational families. The ‘transnational lens’ adopted by migration researchers over the past twenty years, against a background of scholarly interest in the role of networks within globalisation, has enabled deeper understanding of the ties created by migration and resulting transnational social fields (e.g. Faist 2000; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Pries ed. 2001; Vertovec 2009). These ties include the topic of this special issue of *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, namely social remittances: the circulation of ideas and practices to and from sending communities (e.g. Levitt 1998; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011).

However, approaches to the social impact of migration focusing on gaps and ties, despite their complementary nature, do not paint the whole picture because the unit of analysis is normally migrants and their households, former workplaces and networks. Such approaches beg questions about stayers, people who simply live

in the sending country, particularly outside communities with high levels of migration. In what senses, if any, do they inhabit the transnational social space created by mass migration from their country of residence? Stayers are coming more under the microscope of migration scholars, as indicated by, for example, an IMISCOE conference on the topic in January 2015. However, this is still an underdeveloped area. Scholars compare migrants and non-migrants, or discuss why some people stay and others move (Grabowska-Lusińska 2012; Hammar, Brochmann, Kristof, Faist 2002; Hjälml 2013). They explore the impact of international on internal migration (King and Skeldon 2010). However, they tend to neglect other important questions about stayers. How do stayers construct their everyday behaviour and attitudes differently as a result of that country's migration experience? How does migration affect their opportunities and alter the shifting 'class and ethnic hierarchies' (Kaczmarczyk 2014: 118) which they inhabit?

Of course, existing approaches should not be abandoned, but migration impact can be studied more systematically from the stayers' perspective, i.e. 'inside-out'. This has two further advantages: (a) reducing the risk of overstating the impact of migration which occurs if we focus too much on what migrants do; and (b) tapping additional resources for assessing impact, in the form of existing knowledge about the sending society. Rather than asking what migrants do which shapes the origin country, we can use existing data to map how society in the origin country is changing, then ask how migration contributes to that change. One might suppose that mainstream sociologists of sending countries were already engaged in this process. However, unfortunately this seems to happen less than one might suppose. For all their skill in mapping social change in the society of origin, sociologists can fall into the trap of 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003). As specialists on just one society, they do not necessarily see that society as part of a transnational social space. Consequently, they are less likely to focus on studying the impact of migration, and instead tend to look for determinants of social change elsewhere. A nice example is an excellent recent publication on changing habits and customs in Poland, based on a project which combined in-depth interviews of ordinary citizens with content analysis of the Polish media, including soap operas (Arcimowicz, Bieńko and Łaciak 2015). It seems that when the research project was designed, the media was assumed to be the main determinant of change. However, at the end of the book the authors acknowledge that the interview evidence suggests that experience of travel and work abroad was more significant than media exposure. When describing changing customs 'more often than the media, our respondents cited personal experience and observation from travel (from tourism, professionally, to work, to visit family – from their own or someone else's experience)' (Arcimowicz *et al.* 385–386).

Meanwhile, migration scholars naturally concentrate their energies on studying migrants and migration and their more obvious and direct areas of influence on the sending society. They might, for example, notice how particular customs were being brought back from abroad, without contextualising this within the wider picture of how customs were changing overall. The two areas of research – migrants/migration and ordinary residents – are mostly disconnected, hindering a truly comprehensive analysis of migration impact. Looking at the topic the other way round – 'inside-out' – provides a more holistic approach. An inside-out approach requires exploration of the main respects in which society is changing, and producing a map of social change in the given country, based on mainstream sociology. One can then investigate migration as one among various determinants of social trends, although, as Boccagni and Decimo (2013: 2) suggest, 'distinguishing migrants' specific influence, within the wealth of material and symbolic resources that circulate between and within nation-states, may be quite a hazardous task'.

**Poland: social change**

Post-communist EU member-states have experienced considerable social change since 1989 and into the 21st century – change which is even more wide-ranging and profound than changes in Western Europe during the same time. The term ‘social change’ could be discussed at length, but there is no space to do so in this article. It will be understood quite broadly, although I indicate some areas which seem particularly important in the post-communist context. Social science research across the region raises many questions, of which the following seem particularly significant, being relevant in both Poland and neighbouring countries. What new social classes have been emerging since 1989, and how does their emergence relate to changing livelihoods and identities in the region? Are income/lifestyle/gender/other forms of social inequality increasing or decreasing? Are minority rights better observed, and are societies becoming more tolerant? Insofar as society is ‘post-collectivist’ (Pickles 2010), what does this actually entail? How are patterns of consumption changing? What meanings do people attach to the concept of a ‘normal’ standard of living? Is religion becoming more or less significant (and at what levels)? How far do informal practices persist, might they be growing, and if so why? Is civil society becoming stronger, and are democratic values becoming more entrenched? How polarised are political views? How can we conceptualise social change to take into account the fact that thanks to migration the ‘societies’ of individual nation-states are now located partly outside the borders of those nation-states?

Some determinants of such changes may be connected to migration, others to the more general impact of EU policies, globalisation and technological advances; still others are endogenous and represent the continuation of trends since the 1989 transition or before (Bafail 2009). The puzzle is to understand how migration fits within this pattern of overall exogenous and endogenous change and see connections between migration and other influences, without overstating the role of migration, or assuming that its effects will be instantaneously visible.

Poland is a suitable case study because it has so much international migration, with relatively little immigration or internal migration. By 2013, around 1 789 000 Poles were living temporarily elsewhere in the EU, about one million more than in 2004 (CSO 2014). Other countries, such as Romania and Lithuania, have also experienced high levels of migration since EU accession, but Poland has further attraction as a case study because of its particular abundance of both migration research and national sociological surveys. As already mentioned, these national surveys frustratingly rarely distinguish between respondents who have lived abroad and those who have stayed in Poland, and tend to ignore migration as a possible determinant of social change. They nonetheless provide some answers to the questions about the direction of change in post-communist Europe as posed above, and therefore supply the indispensable background information for considering how migration might be contributing to such trends.

Although one should avoid assuming that change is linear – and there is a considerable scholarly literature debunking assumptions about a simple modernising trajectory in post-communist Europe – Polish surveys nonetheless suggest the existence of certain trends. Moreover, there are trends which seem to have intensified since 2004, when Poland joined the EU. These include a tendency for Poles to become more secular and individualistic; evidence of changing views on gender roles; more acceptance of minority rights; and decreasing poverty and income inequality. To pick some specific examples: fewer Poles go to church regularly (Czapiński 2013: 242); gender roles are changing as more couples share cooking, everyday shopping and childcare (Hipsz 2013: 23–24); fewer people oppose divorce (Boguszewski 2013b: 41); fewer people support the idea of an ethnically homogenous state and more are in favour of specific rights for Polish ethnic and national minorities (Omyła-Rudzka 2015). Other trends include changes in the social status of certain occupations: builders and cleaners are more respected (Cybulska 2013: 6); and a more positive attitude towards the law: for example, people disapprove more of motorists speeding (Boguszewski 2013c: 6).

One can guess the existence of certain migration-related influences in all cases, e.g. matching Boguszewski's (2013c) findings on speeding to Kubal (2012) on the changing legal culture of Polish migrants in the UK, or attributing greater respect for builders and cleaners to the earning power of those occupations in the West. However, clearly various influences must be at play. For instance, disapproval of speeding motorists no doubt reflects the success of road safety campaigns in Poland and media accounts of horrific road accidents. If more couples believe that both partners should be breadwinners, this could reflect the fact that it has become easier in recent years in Poland for women to do paid work because there are more childcare institutions, as much as a greater commitment to gender equality (which insofar as it exists, could itself have many causes). Moreover, one should not over-generalise about 'Poles', since drilling down into statistics often reveals considerable complexity, e.g. where middle-aged respondents express more liberal views than younger cohorts (see e.g. Omyła-Rudzka 2015 on attitudes to national minorities), as well as distinctions between city dwellers and others.

Given the sharp economic and political differences between Polish regions, it would seem desirable also to collect statistics about attitudes and behaviour on a regional and indeed local level. Only by looking at local migration impact together with evidence of sub-national social trends could one create a composite picture of the impact of migration on 'Poland'. However, detailed sub-national data is scarce. Regional World Values Survey samples, for example, are rather small, and although in 2012 Eurobarometer conducted a regional-level poll (Flash Eurobarometer 356 *Public Opinion in the EU Regions*), this is limited in scope. A more detailed snapshot is provided by the CBOS, EUROREG and ERESTE study *Living Conditions in Polish Society* (Gorzelać ed. 2008), Zagórski (2008) and other titles in the CBOS series *Opinie i Diagnozy 9–12*. The quantitative data from this study, for example, as presented in *Opinie i Diagnozy* booklets on individual regions, provides information about regional differences in livelihood strategies, such as preferences for migrating to work abroad as opposed to taking out a loan in Poland. In 2010 and 2014 the University of Wrocław, in collaboration with the city council, conducted a Social Diagnosis<sup>1</sup> survey of 2 000 residents, but unfortunately this does not discuss migration other than migration into the city (Błaszczak and Pluta 2015).

Many, though by no means all aspects of social change can be mapped by surveys, but insofar as social change is the aggregated effect of multiple actions by individuals in their everyday lives it can only be understood through qualitative studies. An excellent example is US anthropologist Marysia Galbraith's *Being and Becoming European in Poland* (2014), which includes a chapter on migration as one of several influences shaping the European identities of participants in her longitudinal study in south-eastern Poland, a region with strong migration traditions. In general, Polish qualitative research tends not to factor in migration as a determinant of social change. Some studies, however – like Galbraith's, conducted in regions with high volumes of migration – do accord a prominent place to migration. For example, Halamska's (2012) monograph on the changing Polish countryside (nationally) mentions migration just a couple of times, whereas migration is central to Leśniak-Moczuk's (2015) study of rural change in Podkarpackie. Leśniak-Moczuk (2015: 155) asserts that local people who have returned from working in other parts of Poland or abroad, having been exposed to different values away from home, become more independent and individualistic and possess weaker social ties, contributing to the processes of individualisation in local villages. In the same volume, Komorska (2015: 97), writing about the marginalisation of young people in the economically depressed Lublin region, identifies migration as one of the most significant local facilitators of upward social mobility. However, Galbraith, Leśniak-Moczuk and Komorska are quite exceptional: it is much more typical of both qualitative and quantitative research into Polish social trends to completely ignore any possible migration influences.

### **Local migration cultures and social change: the case of gender roles**

In view of this lack of interest among mainstream sociologists in migration influences, it is not easy to investigate the links between small-scale changes in views and habits which may be occurring as a result of migration, and the evidence of wider cultural change captured by Polish national surveys. However, since I do have regional level survey data about gender roles I can, at least in this one field, apply the methodology outlined above, taking an inside-out approach to migration impact by first identifying the relevant social trends, and then seeing how migration might contribute to such trends. This section will therefore consider the case of gender roles and how social remittances might be leading to greater acceptance of equality between the sexes and greater focus on the nuclear, at the expense of the extended family.

Changing attitudes towards gender roles are an important aspect of social change everywhere, but have an extra significance in countries such as Poland, where gender is highly politicised. The apparent divide between Poles who believe that gender roles are God-given and immutable, or, conversely, should be constructed to become more equal, seems to symbolise profound divides within society. On the whole, the evidence is that belief in the value of similar roles for men and women has been growing, a trend which has been observable since the early 1990s (Fuszara 2005: 13–14) and which has continued in recent years, with caring and breadwinner roles becoming more evenly distributed. For example, CBOS surveys found that in 2006 24 per cent of respondents claimed that in their families childcare was the mother's responsibility; 3 per cent the father's; and 29 per cent that it was shared by both (49 per cent of respondents did not have children). In 2013 the figures were 15 per cent, 1 per cent and 35 per cent respectively (Hipsz 2013: 24). Boguszewski (2013a: 51) reports a drop in the percentage of women who would give up work if their husbands got a sufficiently well-paid job (58 per cent in 2006, 52 per cent in 2013). The most recent 2010–2014 round of World Values Survey (WVS) indicates declining agreement with the statement that 'university is more important for a boy than for a girl'.<sup>2</sup>

Although surveys on these and similar topics show the predictable pattern that younger, better-educated and more urban respondents express more liberal views, it is not the case that every survey shows this unambiguously, and the results are not always easy to interpret. For example, according to the WVS, male city dwellers are not less convinced than other Polish men that 'when a mother works for pay, the children suffer'.<sup>3</sup> Although Polish society is often presented as polarised over moral/gender issues, and this does seem true with regard to arguments conducted in the media and politics, one should not assume that ordinary Poles also have very clear-cut views or always behave in accordance with their Catholic principles. (Choices are surely often made as part of livelihood strategies which find the most sensible options, e.g. limiting family size, not having a church wedding, or, as I shall argue, allowing mothers to work abroad.)

Turning now to migration scholarship: migration specialists have also been interested in changing views on gender, and Coyle (2007), Siara (2009) and Duda-Mikulin (2013) all report the views of Polish women who felt they were treated more equally in the UK than in Poland and welcomed this development. However, such interviewees do not necessarily typify 'Polish women', which is a varied category. Many women labour migrants, especially middle-aged and older women who migrate to care jobs in Italian or Greek households (often sites of traditional ideas about gender roles) come from particularly conservative regions in eastern Poland such as Małopolska, Podkarpacie and Podlasie. Indeed, Prasałowicz (2008: 52) argues that some of the most conservative women migrate precisely because they cannot adapt to find a place in the new, post-communist reality of these often depressed regions. There is evidence of the very 'pro-family' orientations of female migrants to Italy (Małek 2010). However, whatever their views about the ideal distribution of family roles, in practice, through their leaving their husbands to work abroad, such women naturally become more self-confident (Urbańska 2015). In some cases they demand recognition of their new breadwinner status on their return to Poland. Ac-

According to Cieślińska (2014: 67), like Urbańska writing about women from Podlasie, ‘Women emigrants, supporting their families – including their husbands – also change their attitudes. They want to be appreciated more, listened to and respected in their family. They expect to see an improvement in their status within the family, an acceptance of their new image’. It should be noted that Cieślińska and Urbańska are both writing about social remitting not in the sense of ideas from Society B brought home to Society A, but rather about the impact of the women’s personal circumstances (gaining self-confidence through migration) on their behaviour when they return.

Research which explores the lives of female migrants often provides hints, but little direct evidence about the impact of their migration on other women staying in Poland: their female friends, relatives and neighbours, or indeed about the impact of women’s migration on local men. However, in order to ascertain the impact of social remittances, these stayers’ views and behaviour needs to be taken into account.

This is why it is useful to situate social remittances within the wider migration culture, particularly with reference to meanings attributed to migration, and conventions about who should migrate and under what circumstances. As mentioned in the *Methodology* section, I found striking similarities in discourse about migration in all four of the towns which I studied in 2007–2009, as indeed in later projects in Grajewo (2012) and Limanowa (2013). There seemed to be widespread conviction that life was precarious in Poland (particularly in small towns in ‘Poland B’) and that this created ‘situations which forced you to migrate’. Interviewees’ stories about themselves and other local people were full of phrases such as ‘the situation forced her to migrate’ or ‘I’ll migrate if the situation forces me’, although ‘the situation’ had different implications: sometimes it seemed to be an unexpected emergency, and sometimes part of the normal, but unsatisfactory, fabric of local life. It was also emphasised that people did not migrate because they were materialistic: they were going abroad ‘for bread’, not ‘in search of coconuts’: their goal was to achieve a ‘normal’ or ‘decent’ standard of living. Stayers’ attitudes towards migrants were therefore not judgmental. Such views were nicely encapsulated in my interview with a non-migrant in Sanok in 2008:

*Anne: Do you think it’s bad that so many people work abroad?*

*Anita: Is it bad that so many people work abroad? [pause] We’re used to the situation as it is today, here in this part of Poland. And for me it’s not surprising that people go to work abroad. It’s normal here. It’s normal here.*

Side-by-side, however, with statements about the ‘situation which forced you to migrate’, were numerous accounts of how local people were ‘tempted’ and ‘persuaded’ by friends and family to follow them abroad. Interviewees’ stories made frequent reference to what Boccagni and Decimo, already quoted above, term ‘cross-border flow of comments, narratives and gossips [which] make collectively sense of individual mobility’ (Boccagni and Decimo 2013: 4). It may well be the case that this type of remittance meets less resistance than the export of entirely new ideas emanating from the receiving society. An example from my own research in Grajewo is the following telephone conversation in which a Polish woman in the UK is reported describing her life to the interviewee, Dorota, who lives in Poland:

*‘Dorota, I’m alive. I know what I’m working for. And I have free weekends’... She says, ‘It’s a different world...’ She says to me, ‘Pack up and come!’... Here in Poland she never had a holiday, but she went to England and she took her children to Majorca for two weeks. She said, ‘Dorota, it was super!’ If I had a different husband... I wouldn’t even stop to think, I’d just go.’<sup>4</sup>*

As this account suggests, social remittances understood as migrants transmitting new aspirations and ideas about how to behave and think on specific topics unconnected to migration (in this case, a working-class Polish woman in 2008 taking her children on a foreign beach holiday) are hard to separate from attempts to persuade stayers to follow suit. The cross-border flow of narratives therefore contributes to Polish migration cultures. Stayers whom I interviewed lived in transnational social spaces which created the opportunity to experiment with migration. The many local people with close friends and family abroad possessed information and networks which they could safely use to follow in their footsteps, at least temporarily. Elsewhere in the same interview, Dorota mused, 'It may be good, it may be bad, that's the way everywhere. But you *have to give it a go*'.

The next section of this article picks up on the themes identified in the previous paragraph – pragmatism, compulsion and experimentation – to discuss the views of stayers. It explores in turn three different aspects of the migration culture, with evidence of changing views about gender roles and the family as a result of social remittances. These were: pragmatic acceptance of migration by lone mothers; acceptance that maternal migration is justified if the goal is to subsidise children's higher education (since one aspect of local cultures is that parents rather than children bear primary responsibility for subsidising university study); and support for migration by whole nuclear families, at the expense of the extended family.

My 2008 poll asked about a specific livelihood strategy undertaken by lone mothers in such regions: leaving their children (often with their own mother) while they experimented with working abroad. Some 85.3 per cent of respondents believed that 'mothers of small children should not leave their children and husbands to work abroad'. However, when asked what they thought of lone mothers migrating, under specific circumstances ('the situation which forces' migration), 55.1 per cent agreed that 'for lone mothers, migration is often a sensible escape route from a difficult financial situation; afterwards, they can bring their children to be with them and start a new life abroad'. This willingness to condone behaviour which conflicted with established norms was explained by an interviewee (herself a return migrant) in Sanok in 2008:

*Anne: What do people think if a lone mother migrates, leaving her children in Poland?*

*Magda: They're not wild about it. Although, I don't know, you always have to hear both sides. If she's in a really hard situation, well, she's forced, then you can't criticise her, can you?...*

*Anne: But do other people have the same opinion?*

*Magda: Some people think differently, they say she's wrong, but others think the way I do. I think most people agree with me.*

Another area where double standards seem to apply is migration to pay for education. The post-communist period has been marked by a dramatic increase in aspirations for higher education and, although my interviews suggested that parental migration to pay for children's university education is not new, nonetheless the scale seems to have increased, and there are plenty of local examples of this type of migration. Higher education counts as 'bread' rather than 'coconuts': a 'normal' aspiration for decent parents. Migration can apparently justify women leaving their families. This is particularly true for women whose children have left home, but it seems also to sometimes justify migration by women with younger children. The practice was defended, for example, by Beata, a mother of three who had been working abroad for several years, leaving her school-age children in Grajewo: 'After all, I'm a mother. Well, everyone wants their children to have a better life, don't they? I did what I could'. Other local women seemed to accept that this was ordinary behaviour. Kazimiera,

for example, who had never migrated, when asked why people did migrate, asserted that ‘Some migrate to buy themselves housing, others to educate their children’. Danuta, another non-migrant, lamented that ‘I may be forced to work abroad. From the point of view of making some money to help our children get through their five years at university’. Although interviewees did not generally espouse liberal (let alone feminist) opinions, they transgressed gender norms because their behaviour was pragmatic. It was shaped by the conviction that in the absence of local livelihood options you should take up opportunities to work abroad to escape poverty, purchase higher education, etc.

Post-communist societies are said to be becoming less collectivist, and this process can be observed in the growing trend for nuclear families to migrate, leaving behind relatives in Poland and dislodging children from their home communities. This can be seen as both an effect of a wider process of individualisation in post-communist societies, as nuclear families place their own emotional well-being above the interests of their extended families, but also a cause, since it often leads to other families migrating in turn. Families who follow the model of ‘incomplete migration’ – traditional in Poland since the 1990s – are increasingly deciding that instead of the wife and children staying in Poland, while the husband works abroad, it is preferable for nuclear families to uproot the whole household from the local community. My opinion poll demonstrated wide acceptance both that it was ‘easier’ for Polish families with children to live in Western Europe and that it was ‘better’ for children, even teenagers, to live with both parents abroad rather than with one parent in Poland (White 2011: Chapter 6). Families should be together, even if this meant being together abroad. This was quite surprising, given that until recently the norm had so definitely been for only one parent to migrate and that parents who migrated with children were seen as eccentric. The interviews in Poland, as well as my interviews and observations of Poles living in the UK, suggested that this change might be linked to a spreading culture among migrants abroad, especially as EU member-states opened up their labour markets fully to new EU members. Fathers who are working abroad alone see that other Poles invite their family members to join them and often manage to do well, and they decide to do the same, sometimes having been persuaded by friends whose families have reunified abroad. Meanwhile, as in the case of Dorota, quoted in the introduction, women already living abroad are in touch with their female friends and relatives in Poland, and also persuading them that it would be easier and better for their families to migrate. Indeed, one interviewee, Elżbieta, who lived in Suwałki with her children while her husband worked in England, said not only that was it becoming more common in Suwałki for whole families to migrate, but also that many of her friends were asking why she did not go to be with her husband.

### **The impact of migration on locations with low volumes of international migration**

Seeing the map of Poland as a patchwork of different (migration) cultures, some stronger than others, and none of course exactly congruent with administrative regions, begs several questions. The first concerns the geographical boundaries of these migration cultures: for example, whether young people who move to Polish regional capitals bring their small-town migration cultures with them. The second question is more important: whether it is possible to ascertain the impact of migration in Polish cities. My own and other scholars’ research on small communities leaves open the question of how migration influences social change in larger locations, with more diverse economies, a lower incidence of migration, other forms of direct contact with foreign countries (e.g. through business and tourism) and a greater proportion of highly educated residents open to multiple information sources. In particular, it might seem hard to identify the influence of migration on flourishing and fast-developing cities such as Warsaw, Poznań, the Tri-City (Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot) and Wrocław. Such places might be supposed to have weak or non-existent migration cultures.



Wrocław, for instance, might seem to be the polar opposite of small towns such as Grajewo. Located in south-western Poland, with a population of 635 000, it typifies ‘Poland A’ and is often viewed as ‘an iconic success story of Poland’s economic urban transformation’ (Cervinkova 2013: 744). Wrocław has a buoyant labour market: in July 2015, for example, registered unemployment in Poland nationally was 10.1 per cent, but only 3.9 per cent in Wrocław city and 3.8 per cent in Wrocław powiat (constituting much of the suburban area). The housing stock is increasing rapidly: from January to July 2015, 3 288 new dwellings came onto the market in Wrocław city and 1 131 in the powiat (WUS 2015: 14). Like other post-communist cities, Wrocław is acquiring extensive suburbs (Stanilov and Sýkora 2014). Many new estates – as elsewhere – are gated communities, whose inhabitants, according to Kajdanek (2011), work and even go to school in Wrocław city and have little to do with their neighbours. ‘The garden fence is not a border to be crossed when visiting your neighbour. It is a border not to be crossed’ (Kajdanek 2011: 310). By contrast, Kubicki (2011), analysing the worldviews of the 30-something well-educated ‘new bourgeoisie’ of Wrocław and Kraków, emphasises their open-mindedness and sense of civic engagement, ‘breaking away from the closed and mistrustful culture which fatally typified Polish society in the past’ (Kubicki 2011: 226). He writes (2011: 217):

*The generation of the baby boom and the boom in higher education is also the generation of European integration. It was the first generation fully to experience the benefits of free movement: study at foreign universities; work abroad, but also in international organisations inside Poland; and mass foreign tourism, boosted by ease of crossing international borders and cheap air travel.*

Kubicki portrays his ‘new bourgeoisie’ as enthusiastic supporters of the city’s promotional strategy, associated with the Civic Platform local leadership, ‘whose main goal is to encourage people to come and study in the city and then stay on to work’ (Ładysz 2013: 248). Hence the carefully constructed image of the city as a place where people want to live and work. ‘Wrocław’s promotional strategy, under the banner of Wrocław – the Meeting Place, has been widely credited as key to the city’s wealth and prominence’ (Cervinkova 2013: 747). By referring to the city as a ‘meeting place’ (*miasto spotkań*), the local authorities market it as somewhere open and welcoming: a place where people arrive, rather than leave. It is a magnet for foreign investors and also an agent of cultural globalisation, through, for example, its role as European Capital of Culture 2016, or the 2017 World Games.

There is no place in this narrative for migration away from contemporary Wrocław. However, according to a large Lower Silesia-wide survey in 2010, 8.5 per cent of households in the city contained at least one member who had lived abroad for at least three months (Bieńkowska, Ułasiński and Szymańska 2010: 28). According to this study, Wrocław city migrants had a slightly different profile from migrants living elsewhere in the region: they were on average younger and better educated, and about a third had migrated for educational reasons, rather than work; they were less likely than other Lower Silesians to have returned to Poland by 2010, but, if they did return, they were more likely to express the desire to stay, rather than engaging in repeat migration. One reason cited for staying in Wrocław was that they had purchased housing, and according to my own informants in summer 2015 (a local government official and an estate agent employee), return migrants are well represented among the purchasers of new housing in the city suburbs. This raises the intriguing possibility that there is a ‘migration culture’ in such locations, along the lines suggested by Kubicki, where a significant proportion of youngish residents have a migration exposure which re-confirms and intertwines with the other European and global influences which permeate life in Wrocław, at least for the ‘new bourgeoisie’. This would accord with my own impressions from interviewing a small sample of return migrants in Warsaw and Poznań (White 2014).

Nonetheless, as the figures in Bienkowska *et al.* (2010) make clear, the majority of Wrocław migrants go abroad to work, not to study, and share many common features with labour migrants from other parts of the region. In the course of my fieldwork in the UK I had met several working-class labour migrants from Wrocław, as well as many from the other major Polish cities. Even cities with higher than average wages contain poor people who migrate to work abroad, either for purely economic reasons or to join friends and family in the West. During my fieldwork in Wrocław I encountered individuals who used language and espoused views about migration identical to what I had heard in Grajewo and other small towns. These included claims about the mass scale of migration – although usually with regard to young people in particular; pessimism about local prospects and the assertion that young people were ‘forced’ to migrate, reminiscent of the ubiquitous discourse in small towns; strong doubts expressed about whether young people would return to Poland (‘what do they have to return to?’); or the culture of only going abroad to someone you know: the sentiment that ‘I would go abroad if I knew someone there prepared to invite me [but I don’t, so I can’t]’. There were also examples of household migration livelihoods typical of other parts of Poland, for example the owner of a small second-hand clothes shop whose husband and son worked abroad, and who claimed that this was a successful and practical strategy. In other words, poor people in Wrocław seemed to share a migration sub-culture which contrasted dramatically with the official image of the city as ‘the meeting place’.

At the same time, however, many of my conversations provided no evidence of social remittances. For example, an employee at the Registry Office stated that the fashion for giving children non-Polish names was confined to people working abroad, not spreading to regular inhabitants of the city;<sup>5</sup> a pet-shop owner asserted that attitudes towards animals had improved greatly since the 1990s, citing in particular the fact that pet owners bought more expensive dog food, but attributed this to people being richer and better informed from use of the Internet; the owner of a shop selling children’s clothes and toys stated that many of her customers were young Polish parents who worked abroad but were on holiday in Poland and – rather than manifesting any new consumer preferences as a result of living abroad – came to her shop specifically because she sold *Polish* goods.

## Conclusion

To understand social change as comprehensively as possible, and the contribution of migration to social change, entails being open-minded and ready to look for phenomena which do not easily fit within standard frameworks. For mainstream sociologists, it involves writing migration ‘into the story’, along with the media, politicians and other agents of change; for migration scholars, it involves seeing the wider picture of change in the sending country and understanding how stayers as well as migrants view the role of migration in influencing change. Only stayers can tell the researcher about the impact of social remittances. In the Polish case, being open-minded involves not being deceived by the marketing strategies of flourishing cities which obscure the existence of labour migration, or by mechanistic assumptions that low unemployment equals low migration. On closer inspection, it seems that working-class people even in cities like Wrocław both migrate to work abroad and share understandings of migration similar to those held by similar people in other types of Polish location. They live within a migration sub-culture with its own discourse about migration being simultaneously ‘forced’ but also a response to opportunity, and the importance of ‘only going abroad to people you know’. A different migration sub-culture is shared by cosmopolitan highly educated young and young middle-aged return migrants, who to some extent can be identified with the occupants of new suburban housing in cities such as Wrocław – although I have also met similar returnees in small towns in eastern Poland. Thanks to their language skills and ability to discover attractive aspects of the receiving society, such migrants are more likely to transmit social remittances directly from one society to the other.

Despite Poland's undeniable geographical diversity, and the need for thorough studies of particular locations, it is therefore important to adopt a sociological perspective and see the similarities between socio-economic groups, whether they live in cities or in small towns. Studies of 'migration culture' have up to now tended to be place-focused (reflecting the preoccupations of demographers and anthropologists), rather than considering sub-cultures of certain occupational groups (traditionally, more studied by sociologists). Place-based studies need to be complemented by a focus on other variables such as age and social class, as well as on the social networks which connect locations within sending countries.

I have argued that migration culture and sub-culture are useful concepts in understanding social remittances. The meanings attributed to migration in sending societies and beliefs about who should migrate and how migration should be done are in themselves a type of social remittance, since they are transmitted by migrants to stayers in the form of information, persuasion, cautionary tales about how not to migrate, etc. However, changing migration cultures also contribute to wider cultural change. My article considered in particular the causes of a more equal distribution of caring and breadwinner roles between men and women, as captured by Polish national surveys. As migration scholars have noted with regard to Poland, as to many countries, when women migrate this can enhance their status as breadwinners and their sense of independence and self-worth. This is reflected in a number of qualitative studies about migrant women. However, a closer look at the specific migration culture of small towns in eastern Poland, exploring the opinions of stayers and returnees, revealed other specific ways in which women were enhancing their breadwinner status and transgressing gender norms. Their behaviour was leading to 'scaling up' of more liberal opinions. In particular, many respondents approved of temporary migration by lone mothers, despite their otherwise strong belief that mothers of small children should not leave their children to work abroad: an attitude which reflected a more general highly pragmatic attitude to migration. Moreover, the value accorded to higher education in contemporary Poland trumped beliefs about mothers not migrating and led interviewees to condone migration to pay for children's higher education. It was also apparent that migrants who had reunified with their families abroad were persuading other families to do the same, on the grounds that *families should stick together*, i.e. the emotional needs of the nuclear family should be prioritised above the claims of the extended family. This was profoundly changing the normal pattern of migration, from 'incomplete' migration to migration by whole families with children, further enhancing the Polish trend towards more individualised and private lifestyles.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> [http://uni.wroc.pl/sites/default/files/Wroclawska\\_diagnoza\\_spoleczna\\_UWr\\_2014.pdf](http://uni.wroc.pl/sites/default/files/Wroclawska_diagnoza_spoleczna_UWr_2014.pdf) (accessed: 3 March 2016).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp> (accessed: 27 February 2016).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp> (accessed: 27 February 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Interviewed in Grajewo, 2008. All interviewees have been given pseudonyms.

<sup>5</sup> In Poland it has officially been permissible to register Polish children with non-Polish names only since April 2015, but Wrocław had not been observing the regulation, so my informant had longer experience of registering children with foreign names.

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# Remittances As Home Orientation Rooted in the Lifeworlds of Immigrants

Dumitru Sandu\*

*The study considers remittances as part of the lifeworlds of immigrants in multiple interactions with return intentions and communication with those left behind. This is an alternative view of the standard approach to remittances as a possible source of development or as a variable to be explained by family solidarity, investment projects or the reasons for return. The key dependent variable is the home orientation of immigrants as a function of remittances, return intentions and communication behaviours, measured in quantitative and typological terms. The typological analysis of home orientation diverges from the standard approach, which is in terms of high or low intensity of cross-border activities of remitting or communicating between immigrants and those they have left behind. It argues for the fact that cross-border activities combine in different ways to generate specific social types of remitting practices. The remitting behaviours of migrants are, in our approach, multidimensional, encompassing economic, social and cultural content. Three hypotheses are formulated on: 1) collective deprivation in remitting money; 2) survival–development–identification strategies of migrants’ families; and 3) higher predictability of home orientation compared to economic remitting behaviours. In this context, higher predictability means greater variation of the synthetic variable of home orientation by social, cultural and economic factors as compared to the impact of the same factors on the more abstract variable of economic remittances.*

*Keywords: home orientation; remittances; deprivation; communication behaviours; return intentions*

## Introduction

There are two dominant approaches to remittances in micro-level migration research. One considers remittances as an explanatory factor in the well-being of origin households (Özden and Schiff 2007: 4; Miller 2013; Ratha 2013); the other explains remittances in terms of altruism, pure self-interest, ‘tempered altruism’ (Stark and Lucas 1988) or other factors (Carling 2008a). Both of these approaches are relevant to the understanding of migration processes. However, focusing exclusively on these two approaches neglects the fact that remitting is part of interfamily processes and cannot simply be reduced to a ‘variable analysis’. Its full relevance for development cannot be derived from the pure ‘algebra of the variables’ (Blumer 1956). It has interpretation components that are strongly embedded in the ‘lifeworlds of migrants’ (Morawska 1984; Mau 2012) as given

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by their everyday lives and the way they perceive them. It is true that remittances are sometimes contextualised, but this is rarely the case, and is mainly limited to kinship relations (Vullnetari and King 2011). The research community, on the other hand, does feel a need to contextualise remittances (Page and Mercer 2012). The purpose of our study is to contribute to re-embedding remittances in the whole set of home-orientation behaviours of which they are a part.

Better contextualising of remittances is important for theoretical and policy reasons. Such a contextualisation is a key part of understanding: a) that for immigrants, remitting money is deeply embedded in their life strategies, and in their family and community life; and b) how the migration–development nexus is structured and, implicitly, how it could be influenced. Our study employs quantitative analysis including subjective variables, composite indices, typologies of transnational lifeworlds of immigrants, and multilevel models. Before describing the methodological details, we present the framework of the analysis, including first, a section on challenges in the analysis of remittances, and second, a section on the principles of re-embedding remittances in the lifeworlds of immigrants. The section on data and hypotheses will be followed by the results and conclusions.

The first contribution of the study is to propose and test both an index and a typology of the home orientation of immigrants, considering remittances in relation both to intentions to return home and to the intensity of communication with origin families. Second, the analysis tests a hypothesis on the role of different types of deprivation (at origin and destination, personal and collective) in shaping different types of home orientation. All these processes use comparative analysis of a large data set of immigrants in Spain (Reher and Requena 2009), with a small sample of Romanian immigrants in Madrid (Sandu 2009b) providing a more detailed set of measures for the variables of interest. Both data sets are unique in terms of their information content, allowing for the testing of the research hypotheses that are specific to this study. The data are appropriate for obtaining a better understanding of remitting behaviours of Eastern Europeans following the two most recent waves of enlargement of the European Union. Romania (with Spain as a preferred migration destination, after Italy) reached one of the highest rates of per-capita inflow of remittances in Eastern Europe in 2007; in the same year, Spain was sixth in the international ranking of remittance outflows (UNDP 2009).

In this study, monetary remittances are considered not in the standard opposition to social remittances (Levitt, Lamba-Nieves 2011), but as part of a home-orientation complex of economic, social and cultural components.

### **Current challenges in the analysis of remittances**

The idea of understanding migration by contextualising is appropriate not only for its consequences (de Haas 2005), but also for explaining remitting behaviours (Page and Mercer 2012). The standard approach is to consider that unwritten contractual arrangements between migrants and their families involve intertemporal exchanges, of which remittances are a part, and reciprocal altruism creates an environment of low transaction costs as well as trust and loyalty (Stark and Lucas 1988). In this view, families invest in the education of children and, later, children as migrants send back money as compensation to their parents in the form of within-family social exchange (Gentry and Mittelstaedt 2009). The alternative to this solidarity with the left-behind family would be self-interest based on investment plans fostered by migrants remitting money to this family (Dustmann and Mestres 2010), waiting for property rights in the left-behind household, and consolidating their status and prestige in the home community (Stark and Lucas 1988: 470; Stark 1999). The planned behaviours of immigrants in relation to their home families and communities are part of this view, which regards remittances:

*as a basket category that includes far more than just sending money from the place of domicile to a family. By remittances we also mean those contacts such as conversations on the phone that convey ideas, information and values, those journeys that move skills and knowledge around the world and the plethora of activities by which national and international connections are maintained (Page and Mercer 2012: 4).*

A key challenge in the analysis of remittances, associated with the planned behaviours already mentioned, is how they relate to immigrants' intentions to return home. The relationship is particularly difficult to analyse because remittances are measured as a period stock variable (how much money has been transferred home in a certain period of time) and return intentions are recorded as moment states ('Do you intend to return to your home country?'). In most surveys that are not of the panel type, the researcher is put in the position of assessing the relationship between a past stock of remittances and a future-oriented behaviour as regards returning home. The usual hypothesis is that return intentions influence the probability and amount of remitting. Even if one distinguishes between different reasons for remitting (family support, saving for later, other reasons), the findings support the hypothesis. One of the methodological difficulties in testing the hypothesis is that the effect (stock of remittances) is measured for a time that occurs before recording the cause (intention to return). The challenge could be addressed in panel research by using lag correlations and imputing last-period remittances to return intentions at the beginning of the reference period. This is the procedure adopted for a large data set of immigrants living in Germany, using as dependent variables the probability of remitting and the amount of money sent home, and keeping under control relevant status predictors (Dustmann and Mestres 2010). This approach is not possible in non-panel surveys. In fact, several studies concur with the conclusion that '[w]hile the association between remittances and return or visits is clear, the causal mechanisms are complex' (Carling 2008a: 590). Unfortunately, it is hard to find panel data that would enable the measurement of key variables for this study (remitting, deprivation at home and in the destination country, intentions to return, etc.) and allow for comparisons between Eastern European immigrants and those coming to Europe from other continents. Case studies and extended comparisons with cross-cultural data and multiple control variables could function as a substitute for panel data. This is why we worked with two complementary, cross-sectional data sets on immigration in Spain.

Even if the dominant determinant of remittances seems to be the intention to return, intention *per se* could be an effect of previous practices of sending money to those left behind, in a reverse causality pattern. What happens in real life is a continuous set of interacting processes of reciprocal adaptation of return intentions and remitting. Decisions in the interplay between remitting and return plans involve the continuous (re)interpretation by the migrant of the life space in terms of job, income, family, housing and social services in the origin and destination countries. The complexity of such a web of interactions could suggest that only qualitative research (of the type promoted by Marcus (1995)) has much to contribute to the illumination of the multiple interactions between remitting and returning plans. It is the view supported in this study that quantitative analysis could also elucidate such interactions by building composite indices and social typologies.

Another loop that complicates the analysis of this relationship is the possible influence of future estimated income and remittances as a conditioning factor for the current intention to return home. Its emergence is especially probable in times of crisis. Some immigrants come with rather precise plans regarding how much they will earn before returning home. Declining markets that bring fewer employment opportunities or lower incomes could impact expected incomes and, implicitly, return plans. It is difficult to say how frequently this occurs. However, the fact that the situation is plausible induces the probability of correlated errors between predicted remittances and return intention as a predictor.

Finally, it is relevant for the present discussion to note that remitting is more closely related to the probability of returning home than to the vaguely expressed intention to return home, or not (Sandu 2010a). This

highlights the difficulties of measuring the relationship between remitting and planning to return home if the intention to return is measured in a very weak way, using only single questions such as ‘Do you intend to return home?’. Specifications indicating how structured the intention is in terms of probability of return and period foreseen could be very useful from this point of view.

### **Re-embedding remittances in lifeworlds**

The complexity of measuring the relationship between remitting and intentions to return, together with the associated literature, indicates the need to expand the approach in order to integrate a new frame of reference. One such possible extension would be to adopt the lifeworld perspective (Schutz and Embree 2011). Lifeworld is ‘my world’, and ‘consists of my actual and previous experiences of known things and their interrelations (...) and certain more or less empty anticipations of things not experienced thus far, and therefore not known but nevertheless accessible to my possible experience’ (Schutz and Embree 2011: 170). It is formed by past and future experience, and by acts that are supported by ‘in-order-to’ and ‘because’ motives. Explicit or self-declared motives for the ongoing actions are of the in-order-to type. The because motives are inferred by the observer or the self after the action has been accomplished. The embeddedness view of remittances involves building scientifically on the two types of motive. Return plans are a proxy for in-order-to reasons for remitting. Past migration experiences or communication patterns with family left behind are a basis for inferring because motives.

The lifeworld perspective on immigration, with an explicit emphasis on in-order-to motives, was adopted many years ago in social history research in relation to the reasons that Eastern Central European peasants migrated to the United States more than a century ago (Morawska 1984). The lifeworld perspective in quantitative analysis, which is of primary interest in this study, can be located not so much in the area of in-order-to, but in the realm of because motivation. Research on the role of such factors as education, gender, ethnicity and duration of stay in the destination country (Carling 2008a, 2008b) frequently infers because motives from status predictors of remitting. State-of-mind variables at individual or at super-individual level – such as frustration or relative deprivation (Stark and Taylor 1991) – may be a good predictor of remittances. This would be in line with the requirements of the new economy of labour migration (Taylor 1999) that is the preferred framework for the theories used to explain remittances.

The key alternative approaches to exploring the lifeworlds of immigrants that are relevant for remittances involve the use of: in-order-to *versus* because motivations; correlates *versus* antecedent variables for remittances; typologies *versus* non-nominal variables; and one- *versus* two-level regression models. All these alternatives are used in the following sections of this paper.

More exactly, the lifeworld concept is operationalised in this article by: a) integrating economic remitting behaviour into a set of home-orientation variables together with return intentions and communication linkages; b) going beyond a linear measurement of home orientation and complementing it with a typology of orientations towards home (Tables 1 and 2); and c) using a large array of subjective variables (deprivation, identification, perceived effects of own migration on family, life satisfaction and life projects) as proxies for because motives relevant to home orientation.

### **Data and hypotheses**

We used two complementary data sets to meet the objectives of this study. *Encuesta Nacional de Inmigrantes* (ENI), a large survey of more than 15 000 immigrants in Spain, allowed comparison of the profiles of different types of structuring among remittances–return plans–communication patterns. Data were collected during the

period November 2006 to February 2007 (Reher and Requena 2009) by a three-stage probability sampling with stratification in the first stage. The sampling frame for the survey was the population of non-natives over the age of 15 years. The sampling frame was the population register (*Padrón Municipal*). Post-data collection tests indicate this to be a representative sample of immigrants in Spain (Reher and Requena 2009). Unfortunately, the survey included only one question on return intentions (with or without plans to return to the country of birth during the next five years). For this reason, we also used a smaller but complementary data base of 832 Romanian immigrants in the Madrid area. This is known as the Romanian Communities in Spain (RCS) survey. It provides a more detailed measurement of return intentions, namely the probability and likely time-scale of returning (for a description of this sample and its use see Sandu (2009b) and Șerban and Voicu (2010: 110)). The second advantage of this latter data set is that it allows for better proxies of lifeworlds to be considered in relation to home orientation behaviours. Many subjective variables that cover satisfaction – identification, perception of migration consequences, subjective probabilities to return home – are translated into survey questions only in the RCS and not in the ENI. A comparison between predictors in Table 5 (referring to ENI data) and Table 6 (based on RCS data) is relevant in this regard. The RCS survey collected data by respondent-driven sampling in September 2008 in the communities of Alcala de Henares, Arganda del Rey, Torrejon and Coslada. Comparisons between the two data sets are facilitated by the fact that the questionnaire for the RCS survey included questions adapted from or identical to the ENI survey.

The main dependent variable in the analysis is the home orientation of the immigrants, which is measured at a continuous level by an index of home orientation (IHORI) and in nominal terms by a typology of home orientation. The index is constructed from three indicators using the aggregation model proposed by Sandu (2010a, 2010b): a factor score of the logarithm of remittances sent home during the last year; the additive index<sup>1</sup> (with a range between 0 and 3) of intensity of communication with home by telephone, email and regular mail; and the intention to return home (3 – yes, 2 – undecided, 1 – no). Communication is considered to be of maximum intensity (3) if the immigrant declares that she/he uses all the three means of communication mentioned at least once a fortnight to contact people at home. The minimum would be the situation in which none of the communication means were used for at least a fortnight. The three means of communication are measuring the same latent dimension of communication intensity not only at the level of all the immigrants but also for each of the major groups of immigrants in Spain (Romanians, Moroccans, Colombians, Ecuadorians, Argentinians, Bulgarians, people from the EU-15 excluding the UK, and others) as recorded in the ENI. The three indicators that make up IHORI are not strongly related to each other in the case of the subsample of immigrants in Spain from the UK. Here, return intentions are independent of communication and remitting behaviours for British individuals, as they are mainly retired (25 per cent) or climate-attracted (54 per cent) immigrants.

The nominal variable for measuring home orientation was constructed by crossing the variables on communication, return intention and amount of remittances, after dichotomising them. This gives us eight types of home orientation in this property-space (Barton 1955), but if the least frequent cases are reduced to one category (labelled ‘other’), this produces six social types of home orientation (Table 1).

**Table 1. Types of home orientation of immigrants in Spain, 2007**

Type of home orientation of immigrants	Communication with home	Level of remittances	Intention to return home	Proportion in the sample (%)	Index of home orientation (IHORI)
Comprehensive home orientation	high	high	high	7	74
Communication for home return	high	low	high	9	66
Communication for remittances	high	high	low	21	57
Home-belonging orientation	high	low	low	38	48
Generalised low home orientation	low	low	low	20	32
Other	other combinations of values			5	47

Source: ENI, 2007. N = 15 470. IHORI is the factor score rescaled to a range of 0–100 (as a Hull score).

The most frequent type of home orientation relates to immigrants who do not intend to return and do not send remittances at all (or only at a very low level), but communicate frequently with their home in the origin country. We called this ‘home-belonging orientation’, and assume that these individuals are keeping in touch with people at home not for pragmatic reasons (return plans or family arrangements summarised by remittances), but as a result of a well-structured feeling of belonging or similar symbolic reasons. The other two major types are ‘communication for remittances’ (with low values for intention to return associated with very high values for remittances and home communicating), and ‘generalised low home orientation’ in terms of remittances, intention to return and communication. The IHORI values are strongly differentiated between types, with a maximum value for ‘comprehensive orientation’ and a minimum, as expected, for ‘low home orientation’. The IHORI values are highest for the categories of ‘comprehensive home orientation’ and ‘communication for return home’. The social profile for each type will be reconstituted in the results section.

The first hypothesis (H1) relates to collective deprivation in remitting money. It states that immigrants from high collective-deprivation countries, irrespective of their personal deprivation at origin or in the destination country (Spain), will be more likely to have a high home orientation. The reverse should be the case for immigrants with a home orientation index that is lower than the sample average: they are more likely to come from low-deprivation countries. A collective deprivation index that measures the situation in the country of origin could be relevant from that point of view. The collective side of deprivation could favour the development of a culture of remitting in the diaspora communities of people coming from poorer countries. The expectation is in line with the approach contextualising remitting behaviours in terms of communities of practice and options setters (Page and Mercer 2012). It is likely that higher collective deprivation at origin contributes to a culture of remitting more money home and keeping more in touch with those left behind than immigrants from lower deprivation contexts. Hypothesis H1 is tested by ENI data.

The second hypothesis (H2) expresses the idea that home-orientation typologies are mainly differentiated in an agency space of life strategies and identities: immigrants who are focused on home return are more embedded in survival strategies; remittance-oriented immigrants act more in line with family development strategy; comprehensive home-oriented immigrants are those with high identification attitudes (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) and a greater perception of the negative consequences of their own migration on family members.

Push factors of dissatisfaction with life in the destination country are expected to be a reason for building a survival strategy rather than a development strategy and, implicitly, for returning rather than remitting. The

identification typology of Romanian immigrants in the Madrid area differentiates between identification with Romania only, with Spain only, with both countries, and low country identification. This is consistent with the adaptation of the model of interethnic integration (Berry 1997) for describing the identities of immigrants by hybridisation, assimilation, segregation and marginalisation (Rother and Nebe 2009: 124). Hypothesis H2 is tested using the RCS data.

The third hypothesis (H3) assumes that home orientation as a quantitative variable is more relevant for the lifeworlds of immigrants than the remittances they are sending home. If this is correct, one would expect the same set of predictors to produce a higher percentage of explained variation for IHORI compared with remittances variables.

Deprivation as a key independent variable is measured in this study at a personal level at home – as material and cumulative deprivation – and in the host society with reference to investments and housing. A measure of collective deprivation in relation to the origin society is also devised. The package of deprivation variables are as follows:

- Aggregate data from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions in European Union, together with GDP *per capita* and life expectancy at birth, are used to assess the relationship between economic development and indices of material deprivation at society level. The resulting regression coefficients serve to estimate the material deprivation for all the countries that have immigrants in Spain.<sup>2</sup> As a result of the estimation method, collective deprivation for non-EU countries with immigrants in Spain is ‘collective deprivation in relation to GDP *per capita* and life expectancy at birth for the reference countries’.
- ‘Cumulative deprivation at origin’ is an additive index of the reasons for immigration (‘Why did you migrate to this country?’), in relation to job, education, quality of life, family, religion, politics, etc. It takes values between 0 and 9. The higher the value of the index, the higher the level of deprivation that motivated the person to migrate.
- ‘Material deprivation in the household at home’ is computed as an additive index of not owning a house, land, cattle, a business or a car (minimum deprivation coded by 0 and maximum coded by 5). The index is built by items that are relevant for relative deprivation (Stark and Taylor 1991) in the competition between non-migrants and returned migrants. The propensity of former migrants to invest in land, houses or businesses is systematically higher than for non-migrants (Sandu 2006: 158–159).
- ‘Housing environment deprivation’ in Spain is an additive index of the reasons for dissatisfaction with the environment of the individual’s house in Spain (‘Which of the following problems does your dwelling have?’): noise, bad smells, humidity, garbage on the street, vandalism in the area, poor communication opportunities, too small, building defects, etc. The index has a 10-point range.
- ‘Investment deprivation’ in Spain is indicated by assigning a number to reflect situations in which there has been no investment in dwellings, other durable goods, business, land, funds, etc. The index has a 7-point range.

Time predictors mark the distinction between duration of immigration in years and the period of arrival (up to 1989, 1990–1997, 1998–2001, 2002–2007). The distinction is adopted in line with attempts to investigate the specific effect of the period of arrival on remittances and transnationalism as distinct from that of the length of stay in the host country (Carling 2008a, 2008b; Sandu 2010b). The periods are delimited in order to consider important events or processes that could influence waves of emigration, such as the revolutions of 1989 in Europe, the opportunity for Romanians – one of the largest groups of immigrants in Spain – to circulate freely in the Schengen space after 2001, and the two most recent waves of accession to the EU in 2004 and 2007 (Carling 2008b). The annual rate of increase in immigration in Spain was highest, after 1998, in 2001 (42 per cent), 2002 (34 per cent) and 2003 (40 per cent), according to Eurostat figures. Immigration from Ecuador, Colombia and Romania had the highest rates of increase in this period, even if one disregards the effect of regularisation of illegal immigrants from 2001. Immigration from Morocco had a similar pattern (with a maximum increase in 2000). All these figures are indicative of the fact that 2001–2003 was a significant period for

a new wave of immigration in Spain. The immigration wave of 2000/2003–2007 was in a ‘virtuous circle’ relationship with the economic growth in Spain during that period (Arango 2012).

Family lifeworlds and identification worlds are estimated by three typologies using data from the smaller sample of Romanian immigrants in the Madrid area. The first relates to the location of the majority of family members in the host or home country. About two-thirds of immigrants were in the host country with their families (Table A1 in the Annex 1). The second is the net perceived effects of emigration on the family members of immigrants. According to the data in Table A1, 47 per cent of Romanian immigrants to the Madrid area estimate that their emigration had predominantly positive effects on their family members. The proportion of those perceiving predominantly negative effects is 27 per cent, and the remaining 26 per cent perceive mixed effects. The proxy for the lifeworld at country level is a typology of dominant identification with the home, host or both countries. The largest group is that of immigrants who are mainly attached to their home country, Romania (40 per cent). The proportion of Romanian immigrants who are mainly attached to Spain is much lower, at 16 per cent. A significant proportion of immigrants (about one-third) have an ambivalent identification with Romania and Spain. The remaining proportion, about 10 per cent, is made up of people who have a low level of attachment to both Romania and Spain.

Mobility plans for Romanian immigrants in the Madrid area (Table A1), as a specific element of home orientation, are represented by five categories combining time horizon for return (soon or late) and the probability of return (high or low): no intention to return (29 per cent), late and unsure return (15 per cent), soon but unsure (14 per cent), late but sure (10 per cent), and soon and sure (32 per cent).

## **Data analysis and results**

### *Understanding social types of home orientation*

The proportions of each of the main groups of immigrants in Spain for each of the home orientation types are given in Table 2 (data from ENI). Moroccans were, at the time of the survey, the largest group of immigrants in Spain; the main home-orientation types for this group are communication for remittances (25 per cent) and low home orientation (24 per cent). Immigrants who send a large volume of remittances and have an intense communication with home come predominantly from five countries: Morocco, Ecuador, Colombia, Bulgaria and Romania. All these are societies with a high level of deprivation. Immigrants from societies with low levels of material deprivation account for a very small proportion of this category of remittance orientation; British immigrants, for example, who come from a society of low collective deprivation, have the highest and most specific concentration in the category of home-belonging orientation. Immigrants from other EU-15 countries with a low deprivation index are also significantly clustered in the same social type of home orientation. All these findings are clearly consistent with the expectations derived from the first hypothesis (H1): the ‘communication for remittances’ social type of home orientation is specific to immigrants coming from societies with high levels of material deprivation in Africa, Latin America and Europe. The focus on remittances in home orientation is not confined to immigrants from societies that have sent migrants to Spain recently. Moroccan immigration is a much older trend than those of Romania and Bulgaria. The average length of stay in Spain for Moroccans was about 14 years at the time of the survey, while it was only four years for Romanians. In spite of these dissimilarities in terms of time of arrival in the host country, the two groups of immigrants make up a large proportion of the communication for remittances social type. In contrast, the symbolic communication structured around home-society belonging is specific to developed, low-deprivation societies.

**Table 2. Typology of home orientation by country/region of origin for immigrants in Spain, 2007**

Immigrant group by country/region of origin	Type of home orientation of immigrants						Total %		Time of arrival in Spain*	Collective deprivation in country/region of origin
	Comprehensive	Communication for remittances	Communication for return home	Home belonging	Low	Other	%	N		
Moroccan	5	25	6	36	24	4	100	1 845	Before 1989 1990–1997	99
Ecuadorian	15	35	10	25	7	7	100	1 270	1998–2001	75
Colombian	8	39	6	34	9	4	100	1 024	1998–2001	68
Bulgarian	4	31	7	41	11	5	100	341	2002–2007	56
Romanian	11	33	9	33	8	6	100	1 473	2002–2007	52
Argentinian	4	14	11	49	20	2	100	792	2002–2007	50
New EU Member States (NMS-10)	10	12	15	40	18	5	100	236	1990–1997	39
Other EU Member States (EU-15)		2	8	44	44	2	100	2 143	Before 1997	13
British		3	11	69	15	2	100	921	Before 1997 2002–2007	9
Other Latin American	8	23	11	32	21	6	100	1 147	1990–1997 2002–2007	75
Others	7	22	10	35	19	6	100	4 279	1990–1997 2002–2007	77
Total	7	21	9	38	20	5	100	15 470		61

Source: ENI, 2007, weighted data (reduced by dividing weighting factor by its mean in order to keep the sample size constant). Shadowed cells indicate a significant association between column and row values – adjusted standardised residuals that are significant for  $p = 0.05$ . Own computations. \* In a special cross-tab intersecting origin country/region and period of arrival, adjusted standardised residuals were computed. The periods specified in this column correspond to the cell of significant associations from the above-mentioned table.



Communication for returning home as a social type is specific to those immigrants from low-deprivation societies in Europe (EU-15 countries) or the Latin America macro-region (Argentina). Comprehensive home orientation is specific to some groups of immigrants from Ecuador, Romania and the new Member States that acceded to the EU in 2004.

It is clear that the probability of inclusion in different social types cannot be explained only with reference to collective deprivation or the time of arrival in the host society. Resources, personal deprivation and migration experience are also relevant factors. A multinomial regression model (not presented in the text)<sup>3</sup> with types of home orientation as a dependent variable integrated predictors from all the above-mentioned areas (income, tertiary education, ability to speak Spanish very well, gender, young person, investment deprivation in Spain, cumulative deprivation before emigration, collective deprivation in the country of origin, immigration during the period 2002–2007).

According to the results of this multinomial regression on ENI data, collective deprivation continues to be a significant predictor for all five social types of home orientation even if all the other predictors are considered to be control variables.

**Table 3. Role of different types of deprivation in explaining home orientation types**

	<b>Comprehensive home orientation</b>	<b>Communication for remittances</b>	<b>Communication for home return</b>	<b>Home-belonging orientation</b>	<b>Low home orientation</b>
Collective deprivation in country of origin	+	+	-	-	-
Investment deprivation in Spain	+	0	+	-	-
Cumulative deprivation before emigration	0	0	-	-	-

Source: ENI, 2007. Relations in multinomial regression between deprivation predictors and types of home orientation as dependent variables, controlling for income, education, age, gender and ability to speak Spanish: + significant, positive relation, - significant negative relation, 0 insignificant relation for  $p = 0.05$ . The reference category in the dependent variable is the residual one of 'other categories' of home orientation. Detailed data on the regression model are not included in the text.

High collective deprivation in the origin society increases the likelihood of inclusion in the comprehensive home orientation and remittance-structured communication categories. The likelihood of immigrants being included in all the other categories (return intention, home belonging and low home orientation) is increased by low values of collective deprivation.

Different types of personal deprivation affect home orientation types differently. A high level of dissatisfaction at the time of emigration ('cumulative deprivation') has a significant impact in terms of reducing the propensity for return intention and home-belonging orientation. A high degree of frustration in relation to opportunities to invest in Spain fosters comprehensive home orientation and return intentions.

Comprehensive home orientation is associated with high-income and materially successful immigrants coming from poor countries. The same analysis indicates that low home orientation is associated with low-income immigrants who have come from more developed societies or who reached the destination society earlier.

Immigrants who are home oriented in terms of remittances and communication are similar to those characterised by comprehensive home orientation (Table 4). Individuals in both categories come from high-deprivation countries and have higher incomes as immigrants. What is specific to remittance-oriented immigrants is their greater ability to speak Spanish. This is an easy-to-convert human capital resource that allows immigrants

to earn more. The level of formal education *per se* is not relevant in terms of inclusion in the two categories. It is only for remittance-oriented immigrants that knowledge of the host country counts.

**Table 4. Multinomial regression predicting types of home orientation for Romanian immigrants in the Madrid area, 2008**

	Type of home orientation (reference category <i>low values</i> )			
	Comprehensive	Communication for remittances	Communication for return	Home-belonging
Satisfaction with life in Spain	-0.795***	-0.324	-0.778***	-0.302
Satisfaction with money in Spain	0.919**	1.009***	0.344	0.577
Negative effects of own migration on family	0.695***	0.496**	0.561*	0.476*
Positive effects of own migration on family	0.419**	0.655***	0.087	0.397**
Identification with locality at home	0.600*	0.263	0.823*	-0.065
Identification with Romania	1.494**	0.124	1.113	0.025
Identification with Romania and Spain	1.586***	0.363	0.838	0.361
Low country identification	1.122	0.030	0.607	-0.523
No. of life projects related to Romania	0.365**	0.125	0.364*	0.074
No. of life projects related to Spain	-1.210***	-0.050	-0.907***	-0.120
Index of material goods in Romania	0.560***	0.422***	0.433***	0.190
Percentage of family members living in Romania	2.723***	3.070***	-0.034	0.701
Male (1 yes, 0 no)	0.606*	0.336	0.101	0.434
Age	-0.001	0.000	-0.042*	-0.019
Internet user (1 yes, 0 no)	1.835***	2.591***	2.111***	2.781***
Years lived in Spain	-0.010	-0.023	-0.057	-0.005
Arrived in Spain 2007–2008*	0.786**	0.156	0.373	0.142
Urban residence in Romania (1 yes, 0 no)	-0.024	-0.096	0.531	0.161
Constant	-4.600***	-3.268***	-2.732**	-1.780**
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.219			
N	686			

Source: RCS, 2008. \*  $p \leq 0.10$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$  (two-tailed tests). Computing algorithm for positive or negative effects of own migration on family and also for the index of material goods are specified in Sandu (2009a).

The second hypothesis, on the role of survival–development–identification strategies, could be tested only for the sample of Romanian immigrants around the Madrid area (Table 4, Table A1, RCS data set).

Romanian immigrants who are return-home oriented are more influenced by the negative than by the positive consequences of their emigration on their family members. They are also significantly dissatisfied with their life in Spain. These findings suggest that they plan to return home as a kind of survival strategy, as a project to reduce the negative consequences of their emigration on the family, and to reduce their dissatisfaction with their life in Spain. The opposite is true for immigrants who are focused on remitting. They perceive their emigration as being more positive than negative because of its consequences for their own families, and they are also satisfied with the income they receive in Spain. Hence, their life strategies are more in line with the idea of family development than with survival. It is only for immigrants in the comprehensive home orientation category that country identification plays a significant role. There is a higher probability that Romanian immigrants in the Madrid area who identify with Romania or with Romania and Spain will be comprehensively oriented towards home.

Inclusion in the category of home-belonging orientation is the least understood phenomenon. It has the smallest number of recorded significant predictors in the multinomial regression model (Table 4). The immigrants in this category have in their specific profile the highest rate of internet use (79 per cent compared to the average of 52 per cent in the whole RCS sample) and a very low rate of identification with their area of residence in Romania (31 per cent compared to 46 per cent for the whole sample).

The five types of home orientation have family and national culture identification markers as predicted by hypothesis H2 (Table A1).

### *Understanding home orientation and remittances*

The third hypothesis tests the idea that in reality, remittances function as part of a larger set of variables, not as a purely economic component. The comparison of the two regression models for two independent samples in Tables 5 and 6 supports the expectations derived from this hypothesis: the same set of predictors explains the variation of IHORI to a greater degree than the variation of remittances sent home. Table 5 presents the regressions for the large samples from different ethnic groups of immigrants in Spain (ENI). Table 6 uses data from the smaller sample of Romanian immigrants in the Madrid area (RCS). Although the predictors in the two tables are different, they refer to the same large categories of status variables (age, gender, education, income, ability to speak Spanish, type of family, etc.), frustration variables and arrival time in Spain. For the smaller sample of Romanian immigrants in the Madrid area, the set of available predictors is more extensive, and includes more variables relating to satisfaction, geographic identification and community location.

Multiple determination ( $R^2$ ) is 7 percentage points higher in terms of explaining IHORI than the variation of remittances for the large ENI sample of immigrants from different countries in Spain (Table 5). The difference is much higher between the explained variation for IHORI ( $R^2 = 0.41$ ) and for remittances ( $R^2 = 0.17$ ) as a dependent variable for the case of Romanian immigrants in the Madrid area (Table 6). This finding indicates that remittances are more meaningful in social life when they are considered together with behaviours of communication with home and intentions to return home. The regression models on the RCS data set are more clearly specified, as the survey in the Madrid area was explicitly focused on return migration projects and had a larger set of available predictors. The large data set of immigrants from all origin countries (ENI) was mainly descriptive by design and offered fewer opportunities to identify predictors that are relevant for IHORI or remittances.

**Table 5. Predicting home orientation and remittances for immigrants of different ethnicity in Spain, 2007**

		Dependent variable			
		Index of home orientation (IHORI)		Amount of remittances sent home (ln)	
		Coef.	P > t	Coef.	P > t
Status variables	Male*	-0.388	0.232	0.073	0.185
	Age	0.002	0.197	-0.001	0.300
	Unskilled worker*	-2.354	0.000	-0.041	0.677
	Unmarried*	1.445	0.001	0.343	0.000
	Primary education*	-1.806	0.001	-0.610	0.000
	Income (ln)	0.235	0.000	0.161	0.000
	With children together in Spain*	0.335	0.007	0.142	0.000
	With spouse together in Spain*	-1.740	0.000	-0.605	0.000
	Speaks Spanish very well*	1.354	0.000	0.021	0.793
Deprivation	Cumulative deprivation at time of emigration	0.441	0.001	0.183	0.000
	Investment deprivation in Spain	0.543	0.022	0.115	0.001
	Material deprivation at home	-2.457	0.000	-0.424	0.000
	Housing environment deprivation in Spain	-0.144	0.125	-0.042	0.016
	Collective deprivation (ln)	1.930	0.000	0.866	0.000
Time variables	Year of arrival in Spain	0.232	0.000	0.011	0.017
	Immigration before 1990*	-3.958	0.000	-0.327	0.000
	Immigration 1998–2001*	1.987	0.000	0.510	0.000
	Immigration 2002–2007*	3.130	0.000	0.248	0.049
Origin area	Morocco*	-2.131	0.000	-0.237	0.041
	Romania*	-0.805	0.060	0.742	0.000
	Latin America*	2.475	0.000	0.484	0.001
	EU-15*	0.513	0.523	0.253	0.003
	Other NMS of EU*	-2.784	0.007	-0.121	0.348
	Constant	-413.801	0.000	-21.920	0.015
R <sup>2</sup> full model		0.278		0.209	
R <sup>2</sup> without wave effect		0.184		0.198	
R <sup>2</sup> without deprivation predictors		0.255		0.183	
N		14 821		14 821	

Source: ENI, 2007. OLS regression in STATA using cluster option to correct for similarity profile of immigrants from the same province of Spain. 52 clusters. Suspicions of collinearity are dismissed by the very low values of VIF (mean value of 2.05, maximum value of 4.90).

Variables: \* dummy variables; reference category for immigration period 1990–1997.

Time variables are particularly relevant for IHORI in the case of the analysis of all categories of immigrants (ENI): the elimination of three period-effect variables from the home orientation regression decreases its explanatory power by 10 percentage points (from 28 per cent to 18 per cent). The same type of elimination of the wave predictor in the regression of remittances produces a very small decrease in the explanatory power of the model (Table 5). This simple comparison is a sufficient indicator that the time of arrival of immigrants has a greater impact on the cluster of behaviours measured by IHORI than on the isolated component of it referring to remittances.

Time variables have no relevance in explaining variation for IHORI in the case of the Madrid area sample (Table 6). This could be because Romanians in the Madrid area are not as heterogeneous in terms of their arrival time as immigrants to Spain from the origin countries as a whole.

**Table 6. Predicting home orientation and remittances for Romanian immigrants in the Madrid area, 2008**

	Dependent variable	
	Index of home orientation	Remittances sent home (ln)
Male*	-0.422	-0.090
Age	-0.005	-0.001
High school education*	0.919	0.223
Self-perceived ability to speak Spanish	-1.362***	-0.018
Income (ln)	0.655***	0.174***
Index of material goods in Romania	1.123***	0.238***
Percentage of family members living in Romania	6.044***	2.819***
Married*	4.018***	1.206***
Network capital in Romania	8.772***	0.328*
Urban residence in Romania*	-1.865**	-0.587**
Satisfied with job in Spain*	-2.325***	-0.650**
Satisfied with money in Spain*	2.710***	0.699**
Satisfied with health in Spain*	-1.778***	-0.121
Perception of negative effects of own migration on family members	1.478***	-0.067
Positive perception of job opportunities in Romania in the future	3.003***	0.481**
High identification with Romania*	3.907***	-0.136
High identification with Romania and Spain*	2.929**	0.165
High identification with Spain*	-3.396**	-0.469
Years lived in Spain	-0.087	-0.020
Arrived in Spain in 2007–2008*	0.878	0.455*
Residence in Coslada*	2.220**	0.511*
Residence in Arganda del Rey*	4.052***	0.837***
Constant	29.149***	2.709***
R <sup>2</sup> full model	0.418	0.17
R <sup>2</sup> without wave effects	0.417	0.167
R <sup>2</sup> without frustration predictors	0.393	0.161
N	829	829

Source: RCS, 2008. OLS regression. Suspicions of collinearity are dismissed by the very low values of VIF (mean value of 1.38, maximum value of 0.97). \*  $p \leq 0.10$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$  (two-tailed tests).

Variables: \* dummy variables. \*\* Coslada and Arganda del Rey are two of the four communities of Romanians around Madrid included in the survey. The Romanians in the local population are concentrated most heavily in these two communities (Şerban 2011: 149). Immigrants in Coslada come mainly from the historical region of Muntenia in Romania, and those in Arganda del Rey come mainly from Transylvania, another historical region of Romania (Sandu 2010b: 127).

The cluster of home-orientation behaviours are embedded in the contexts not only of time and level of deprivation but also of place of origin. IHORI tends to be significantly higher for immigrants from Latin America and significantly lower for those coming to Spain from Morocco. Places such as the old European Union (EU-15) or Romania do not condition *per se*, in a significant way, the values of the complex of home-orientation behaviours.

The ability of immigrants to speak Spanish has different impacts on home orientation. Its impact on the whole community of immigrants in Spain appears to be positive if one controls for ethnicity and other status predictors (Table 5). A more detailed analysis for each large group of immigrants produces a more nuanced picture:<sup>5</sup> immigrants from Latin America or countries in the EU-15 are in the particular situation of being more home oriented if they speak Spanish better; the impact of Spanish-speaking abilities is insignificant for IHORI in the case of Moroccans. The more clearly specified regression model for the Romanian immigrants in the

Madrid area indicates a higher home orientation for those with lower ability levels in Spanish (Table 6). The pattern could be specific to groups with less experience of migration.

Life dissatisfaction and individuals' perception of the negative consequences for their family of their own migration tend to increase the home orientation of immigrants (Tables 5 and 6). Dissatisfaction with job and health in the host country in particular contribute to an increase in home orientation. The only type of dissatisfaction that seems to act in a different direction is that relating to income. Immigrants who have lower earnings and are dissatisfied with their income have lower home orientation as expressed by return intentions, communication frequency with home and remittances sent back.

The results of bivariate analysis (Table A1) on the role of cultural variables are also supported by regression analysis on the Madrid area data set. A higher level of identification with the origin country and a higher degree of ambivalent identification with both origin and host countries contribute to strong home orientation of immigrants. Return, communication and remitting behaviours have higher probabilities not only for those who are attached to their home country, but also for those who have an ambivalent cultural orientation towards the home and destination countries. The same types of behaviour are supported by different cultural attitudes in terms of national and transnational identifications.

Social ties at family and non-family level are significant predictors of home orientation and remittances: higher values for IHORI and sending remittances are associated with those immigrants who have a larger proportion of family members, a spouse and larger network capital in their home country (Table 6).

## Conclusions

The index of home orientation of immigrants (IHORI) has a systematic variation under the influence of collective deprivation (as expected under H1), life strategies and identification (in accordance with H2). Irrespective of many other control variables, IHORI tends to be higher for immigrants in Spain coming from countries of higher collective deprivation. The third hypothesis (H3) is also supported by the data: home orientation behaviour, compared to its component of remitting money home, is much more deeply rooted in the social worlds of immigrants (as predicted by the H3 hypothesis). This is demonstrated by the much greater explained variation of home orientation compared with the explained variation of remitting behaviours when the same sets of predictors are used in multiple regression models. All these hypotheses are tested with positive results by running the same algorithms on two different data sets (ENI and RCS).

The testing results are important as they contribute to the expansion of the set of predictors of remittances and home orientation to areas that were previously neglected. Such neglected factors refer mainly to deprivation, perceived consequences of own emigration on family members, and time of arrival at destination. Some of these factors could be measured at different levels and proved to have effects function of measurement level. This is especially the case for deprivation when measured at national or collective level, in contrast to personal level. Migration and remittances are, in the light of the results of this analysis, multilevel phenomena, with specific variation function of individual, household, community and national scale.

The expanded explanation of home-orientation behaviours covers not only the variation of IHORI as a quantitative variable but also its nominal expression as given by the typology of home orientations. These types send to consistent clusters of behaviours.

Remitting behaviour is not only part of a home orientation set of behaviours. It is also indicative for social types of immigration practices. Immigrants who are focused on sending remittances home have a specific profile compared to other types of immigration practices (return-home orientation, home-belonging orientation, comprehensive orientation towards origin country, and low home oriented: Tables 1, 2 and A1). Remittance-focused immigrants are more inclined to be ambivalent in terms of their attachments to the origin and

destination countries, have more of their family members in the origin country, and come from countries with higher levels of material deprivation (in accordance with hypothesis H1). Collective deprivation in the origin country is associated not only with the adoption of a remittance focus, but also with the comprehensive type of home orientation.

A social type that has high symbolic value is that relating to immigrants who are focused on home-belonging orientation. The immigrants in this category communicate intensively with home, though not for the purposes of returning or of sending remittances. They communicate for communication's sake or, more exactly, for reasons not measured in the research, such as family solidarity or homesickness.

There is a high level of association between home orientation types and their geographic or national identification: return and comprehensive orientations are associated with immigrants who are attached to their origin country; remittance-focused immigrants are mainly ambivalently oriented towards their home and host societies; Romanian immigrants who are especially attached to Spain are characterised by home-belonging orientation or by practices of low home orientation.

Home orientation in behavioural and quantitative terms proved to be as consistent as its qualitative counterpart measure of home sense (Wiles 2008). These related concepts capture the symbolic universe that the migrants confer on their place of origin when in host countries.

The typological analysis of home orientations diverges from the standard approach that supports the view that 'cross-border activities and exchanges do not cluster together' (Waldinger 2008: 24). It argues for the fact that cross-border activities cluster together in different ways for specific social types. This clustering is frequently non-linear, by specific social types of home orientation.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> 'Additive index' in this article refers to a measure that sums several unweighted dummy variables (coded by 1 for the presence of the attribute and by 0 for its absence). The summing is equivalent to counting a set of pre-established values across several variables for the same unit of analysis.

<sup>2</sup> Material deprivation (MATDEPRIV) is estimated based on regression equation for 26 EU countries, EU-SILC data 2007:  $MATDEPRIV = 327.4 - GDPpc * 43.5 + LIFEexpectancy \text{ at birth for } 2007 * 31.3$ .  $R^2 = 0.81$ . The starting values of material deprivation (3 or more items) by country refer to 26 countries of EU (excluding Luxembourg with a very high value), for 2007 (source: Eurostat [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_sip8&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_sip8&lang=en)).

<sup>3</sup> The multinomial regression model gave a pseudo R squared value of 0.12. It was run in STATA with cluster option to correct standard errors, function of province of residence of immigrant in Spain. The reference category for the dependent variable is the 'other' type.

<sup>4</sup> The findings referring to the relationship between language abilities and IHORI derived from running the regression model from Table 3 by each specified group of immigrants with ENI data.

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# Social Remittances and the Impact of Temporary Migration on an EU Sending Country: The Case of Poland

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*This article sheds light on the unintended consequences of temporary migration from Poland by combining Merton's functional analysis with Levitt's work on social remittances. In addition to economic remittances, Polish migrants have been bringing norms, values, practices and social capital to their communities of origin since the end of the nineteenth century. The article presents a juxtaposition of the non-material effects of earlier migration from Poland, dating from the turn of the twentieth century, with those of the contemporary era of migration from Poland since the 1990s. The analysis shows that some aspects, such as negotiating gender roles, the changing division of household labour, individualistic lifestyles, new skills and sources of social capital, and changing economic rationalities are constantly being transferred by migrants from destination to origin communities. Contemporary digital tools facilitate these transfers and contribute to changing norms and practices in Polish society. The article demonstrates that migration fulfils specific functions for particular sections of Polish society by replacing some functions of the communist state (e.g., cash assistance and loans from communist factories, factory and post-coop cultures) and by facilitating their adaptation to changing conditions (e.g., changing gender relations, new models of family, job aspirations and social mobility).*

*Keywords: temporary migration; unintended consequences; social remittances; Poland*

## Introduction

In the first decade of the new millennium, circular and temporary labour migration trends reached a climax in Europe as an increasing number of migrants began to engage in more fluid forms of mobility (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014). The European Union (EU) offered numerous new job opportunities and helped migrants to engage in temporary circulation, particularly following its 2004 and 2007 enlargements to include Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries (Glorious, Grabowska-Lusińska and Kuvik 2013). Fassmann, Kohlbacher and Reeger (2014) calculated that by 2011, almost five million citizens from CEE countries were living in the 'old EU'. Furthermore, 2011 Polish census data revealed that over two million Poles had resided abroad for at

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least three months (Goździak 2014: 1). This massive migration is accompanied by significant reverse flows of return migrants. However, it is often the case that the return migration of Polish labour migrants does not imply permanent return. For many Polish migrants return often merely means a short break between periods spent abroad (Kaczmarczyk 2013: 112).

This article discusses some of the unintended consequences of temporary labour migration for particular sections of Polish society. Temporary migration refers to every move made abroad and back by migrants for both short-term (up to three months) and longer-term periods (more than twelve months), usually in connection with employment in a foreign labour market. Central to our functional analysis will be the concepts of *unintended consequences* and *social remittances*. Our assumption is that the concept of social remittances (the transfer and circulation of social practices, norms, values and social capital by migrants to the home country) helps to reveal the unintended consequences of contemporary labour migration for Polish society.

The outline of the article is as follows. First, we discuss the relevance of a functional analysis to understand some unintended consequences of temporary labour migration. Second, we introduce the concept of social remittances. Third, we explain the relevance of the Polish case and introduce arguments based on a review of Polish studies documenting the social consequences of migration for Polish society.

### **Functional analysis and unintended consequences**

A central theme in the work of Merton (1989, 2006) is the phenomenon of unintended consequences. In his analysis of the unintended consequences of human action Merton (1967: 51) made a distinction between *manifest* and *latent* functions. The manifest functions are the objective consequences of social action which are intended and recognised and help social systems to adjust and adapt, whereas latent functions of designated social structures or socially patterned action refer to ‘those unintended consequences for a specified unit (group, social stratum, social or cultural system) which contribute to its adaptation, to its persistence and evolutionary change. Unlike manifest functions, latent functions are not the result of plan or design but of social evolution’ (Merton 1989: 316). Merton also made clear that in a differentiated society, social patterns may have multiple consequences which can be functional for some individuals and subgroups and *dysfunctional* for others (Merton 1967: 27, 53). Sztompka (1990: 60–61) gives as an example a competitive success orientation or ‘achievement syndrome’ that may benefit the economy, but ‘at the same time lead to the neglect of family life and consequent breakdown of family structure’.

Critics of the functional framing of issues have argued that it ignores knowledgeable human agents and that the distinction between manifest and latent functions is imprecise (Campbell 1982; Elster 1990; Mica, Peisert and Winczorek 2011). Elster (1990) and Giddens (1984, 1990), for example, rejected the concept of latent functions on the grounds that actors might recognise the consequences of human action, or that presumed unintended consequences are intended by actors. Campbell (1982: 33) argued that there are at least four different meanings of the manifest–latent distinction: 1) the contrast between ‘conscious intention’ and ‘actual consequences’; 2) ‘common-sense knowledge’ *versus* ‘sociological knowledge’; 3) ‘official aims’ of an organisation *versus* ‘unofficial’ aims; and 4) ‘surface meaning’ *versus* ‘deep understanding’. Boudon (1990: 136), in his defence of Merton’s distinction between manifest and latent functions, mainly refers to the second and fourth dimensions of latent functions: ‘Manifest functions are visible and do not need the social sciences to be detected. Latent functions are not only invisible but sometimes half-consciously hidden’. Portes (2000: 9), on the other hand, refers to the third meaning when analysing the latent function of US–Mexican border control (see also Portes 2010). The latent function of border control – as a symbol of a national determination to defend certain values – is in his view more important than the manifest organisational aim of stopping the flow of illegal immigration. Finally, Rigney (2010: 14) refers to the first meaning in his book on ‘Matthew

effects' in technology and different social fields. He cites as an example the fact that the inventors of the automobile probably did not intend or recognise its latent dysfunctions, such as contributing to climate change and creating greater social distances between people by locking them up 'into isolated moving compartments'.

This article will *not* resolve conceptual confusion about manifest and latent functions. In line with Boudon (1990), the article mainly refers to the second and fourth meanings of the manifest–latent distinction. Apart from the obvious economic benefits, labour migration has social consequences that might be more difficult to trace but are important for the development and evolution of households, communities, regions and societies. And in line with Portes (2000: 9), we are of the opinion that social consequences of temporary labour migration are often 'not recognized but are nonetheless real'. The concept of latent functions gives rise to the analysis of unexpected, unintended consequences of human actions that are important for the sustainability of specific social units or that are destructive for particular sections of societies.<sup>1</sup> A crucial element of functional analysis is Merton's plea (1967: 52) for revelation of the *social mechanisms* through which functions are fulfilled.<sup>2</sup>

Functional analysis can be applied to labour migration as it is an important patterned process. It is also clear that migration brings about multiple and contradictory consequences (functional for some and dysfunctional for others), both for traditional units of functional analysis – such as the economy, the family, social and religious organisations, and local communities – and for specific social groups and classes of a society (cf. Sztompka 1990: 60–61; Rigney 2010: 14). However, our aim in this article is not to pass judgement on migrants' activities and their consequences. We want to understand the unintended consequences of temporary migration from Poland, including possible dysfunctional aspects. And we think that a functional analysis is still 'an exceptionally useful sociological approach' for such an undertaking (Calhoun 2010: 14). The current prominence in the social sciences of mechanism-based explanations is profoundly influenced by the work of Merton and is highly relevant for migration studies (Hedström and Ylikoski 2010; Tilly 2010; Faist 2015; Bakewell, Engbersen, Horst and Fonseca 2016).

## **Unintended consequences of migration and the mechanism of social remittances**

### *Unintended consequences*

Within migration studies, Massey (1986) and Portes (2000, 2010) have used the concept of latent functions to highlight some unintended consequences of migration, such as the symbolic nature of US–Mexican border control, and the social and economic benefits for migrant enterprises of a soccer club established by Mexican migrants in California (Massey 1986: 103; Portes 2000: 9).<sup>3</sup> In addition, Landolt (2001) has discussed the cumulative and unintended consequences of economic transnationalism for migrant households, immigrant community and sending country, using Merton's concept of unintended consequences. While intended to improve the economic well-being of migrants' households and their communities, they ultimately 'have the unintended consequence of perpetuating a bankrupt economic system' (Landolt 2001: 234). Second, the economic obligations of migrants to transnational households limit their ability to maintain their social relations with non-household members. The circulation of financial resources and moral obligations or commitments to family can cause undesirable and unintended consequences, undermining 'the formation of locally oriented social networks of support' (Landolt 2001: 234; see also Portes and Landolt 1996).

### *Social remittances*

Levitt (1998, 2001) introduced the concept of social remittances as a conceptual tool to classify and explain intended and unintended consequences of migration. The concept of social remittances demonstrates that, in addition to money, migrants also export back ideas, norms, lifestyles, behavioural practices and social capital to their home country (cf. also Castles *et al.* 2014: 43). Social remittance is an example of a social mechanism through which specific functions are fulfilled. These social remittances influence particular sectors in the receiving countries. In the case of Polish labour migration, Okólski (2012a: 74) states that (temporary) labour migration 'may be favourable or even indispensable for modernisation'. Sandu has argued that that 'temporary emigration is one of the modernising factors of current time Romania acting directly at individual level' (Sandu 2010: 286).

In her work on social remittances Levitt (1998, 2001) distinguishes three types: 1) normative structures; 2) systems of practice; and 3) social capital. Normative structures consist of ideas, values and beliefs. Examples are norms on equal gender relations. Systems of practice refer to divisions of labour in the household, religious practices, and patterns of civil and political participation. For organisations they include membership, recruitment and socialisation systems, leadership styles, and intra-organisational models. Social capital refers to the capacity of individuals to mobilise resources (such as information, financial means, material support or organisational skills) from the networks and broader social structures in which they are embedded (Bourdieu 1985; Portes 1998). It may also include the norms and values on which it is based (Levitt 2001). Social capital is based on four sources (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Portes 1998): 1) value introjections; 2) reciprocity exchange; 3) bounded solidarity; and 4) enforceable trust. Value introjections mean introducing norms and values to individuals that encourage them not only to act for pragmatic, individual profit but also to provide altruistic assistance to others. Reciprocity exchange means expecting reciprocal benefits from the non-material help provided. Bounded solidarity is about the group solidarity arising from a common situation or experience, and the obligation to provide assistance to group members. Enforceable trust is based on a more anonymous reciprocal relationship between giver and recipient that derives from both actors being part of a common social structure. The giver provides support because they expect to profit from it and trust that the community will apply collective sanctions should the recipient fail to fulfil their obligations (Engbersen 2001).

Social remittance exchanges occur when migrants return to live in or visit their communities of origin, when non-migrants visit those in the receiving country or through modern communication exchanges (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2010). While those involved often cannot immediately recognise the social consequences of their migration experiences, over time migrants may learn to do so, usually with a certain time lag.<sup>4</sup> Levitt (2001) also argues that just as economists distinguish individual economic remittances (for individuals and households) and collective economic remittances (to benefit a group, community or entire society) it is possible to distinguish individual and collective social remittances. Individual social remittances are the transmission of individual behaviours, and interactions and exchanges between friends, family members and neighbours. Collective social remittances are organisational actions taken by migrants to create collective goods (e.g., a sports complex, fire station or arts centre) or to organise activities to benefit a local community (e.g., public health campaigns) (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2010).

### **Unintended consequences and social remittances: the Polish migratory case**

Poland became the main sending country in Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Institutional barriers to the labour markets introduced in the 1990s by the main receiving countries of Western Europe and North America had fostered a specific pattern of mobility of Polish nationals: migration mostly

took the form of repeated short stays abroad and involved seasonal or temporary employment in agriculture, the construction sector or household services (Fihel, Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2006). In order not to exceed the three-month non-visa stay limit in West European countries, Polish nationals would return to Poland and migrate again immediately or after a short time, depending on their economic motives and family circumstances. The term ‘incomplete migration’ (Okólski 2001, 2012b) was coined to capture this back-and-forth mobility (Jaźwińska and Okólski 2001).

The EU enlargement of 2004 and the lifting of institutional barriers to the Polish workforce in some EU member states gave observers reason to believe that the outflow from Poland would become increasingly permanent. This turned out to be partly true (Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski 2009). However, temporary migration has remained an important part of the outflow from Poland, although the duration of stays abroad has lengthened (Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski 2009). The scale of the outflow from Poland so soon after EU enlargement, and the economic and demographic aspects of this process have been discussed extensively (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008). However, a systematic analysis of the social, partly unintended consequences for Polish society is still missing.<sup>5</sup> As argued before, the social mechanism of social remittances offers an analytical tool to document these social consequences.

#### *19th- and 20th-century migration studies*

The central ideas behind the concept of social remittances are not new in international migration literature (for overviews see, e.g., Vecoli and Sinke 1991; Walaszek 2003). Although social remittances were not so named nor systematically discussed in the past, international scholars have observed changes in norms, values and attitudes resulting from migration. For instance Thomas and Znaniecki’s (1918/1920) renowned monograph *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, while not referring directly to social remittances, has plenty to say about non-financial circulation between origin and destination communities, and the intermingling of old and new norms, values and attitudes. Authors wrote about ‘social becoming’ in the new context, meaning individuals, families and whole communities re-fashioning their way of life. The families they analysed were fusing old normative systems from the sending country with the new normative systems of the receiving country, which sometimes resulted in social conflict and brought unintended consequences to both origin and destination.

Historical Polish migration literature, alongside studies of Polish migrants in various local destinations, also shows the sending country perspective, usually after migrants’ return to their local communities (see, among others, Krzywicki 1891a, b; Chałasiński 1936; Duda-Dziewierz 1938; Zawistowicz-Adamska 1948).

We deliberately selected for further analysis instructive historical studies where social remittances, although not termed such, somehow became operationalised with sociological indicators of changing norms, practices and social capital through migration. We found two categories of studies dating from between 1890 and the mid-1930s, (preceding World War II) that looked at: 1) the impact of social remittances on sending locations (e.g., Krzywicki 1891a,b; Duda-Dziewierz 1938); and 2) the circulation of social remittances between origin and destination (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918/1920; Chałasiński 1936) (see Table 1 for selected historical overview and enumeration of social remittances). It is important to note that at the turn of the 19th century it was much easier to filter out the impact of migration on destination and origin from other social processes than in the 21st century, because these occurred before the technological revolution that so profoundly affected the complexity and outreach of social diffusion.

All the above-mentioned scholars working at the turn of the 19th century agreed that migration produced more individualised lifestyles which also had spill-over effects on the inhabitants of local sending communities. Scholars showed that migration not only promoted a new type of individual, more mobile and freer from

the Polish feudal system and local social control, but also indirectly hastened the modernisation of isolated and remote rural areas of 19th-century Poland (cf. Grabowska, Garapich, Jaźwińska and Radziwinowicz, in press).

In the first category of studies, Krzywicki (1891b) and Duda-Dziewierz (1938) focused on the social impact of migration on both the concrete everyday practices and the more general normative structure of local sending communities. For instance, Krzywicki (1891b) noted that the labour migration of Polish peasants, mostly from the Prussian part of Poland to German Saxony (in Polish: *saksy*) was changing everyday practices in the communities of origin in terms of clothing (wearing shoes) and using household equipment (different utensils to prepare potatoes, noodles, etc.). Krzywicki also noted that after migration to Germany, female migrants began to institute greater gender equality in Polish households, with male assistance in everyday household activities such as cleaning, cooking and childcare. He was concerned that migration had contributed to people's reduced feeling of 'Polishness' during the historical partitioning of Poland into Russia, Prussia and Austria, but he also underlined that migration facilitated changes in attitudes within Polish society, questioning the feudal way of life and liberating the people from its pressure.

Duda-Dziewierz's (1938) monograph of Babica, a small emigration village in Malopolska, Poland, showed vividly that return migration and ongoing communication with the USA (through letters, newspapers and magazines) produced changes in the village way of life: households were run in a more professional and systematic way, the environment was cared for, common spaces were created, people began to meet in social places not necessarily connected to religion (e.g., after Mass), and hard work and its rewards began to be appreciated. She described how the customary way of life in the village had changed. She also documented changes in the cosmology of the people, who developed a more rational worldview, and became more critical of the impact of the Catholic Church on many aspects of life. This more rational worldview, together with emerging new forms of leadership, encouraged residents to cooperate and to contribute to the social and structural reorganisation of the village, which meant migrants buying new land in the village and settling there, the breaking down of the old territorial and social barriers between peasants and serfs, and locating new common (non-religious) cultural centres at the heart of the village, which according to Levitt amounted to a kind of collective social remittance. Duda-Dziewierz also documented the growing importance of more rational, entrepreneurial attitudes that stimulated economic investment in the land or the establishment of small businesses.

In the second category of historical studies relating to the circulation of social remittances between origin and destination, both Thomas and Znaniński (1918/1920) and Chałasiński (1936) underlined the creation of transnational identity, being 'here and there' (the traditional sending of letters and parcels and infrequent visits to the sending village), that facilitated this circulation. All authors emphasise the almost 'mythological sense of migratory return' that encouraged migrants to live in transnational social spaces. As Chałasiński noted, this pattern of 'migration for return' was broken when World War II led to people becoming stuck in the receiving country. Both Thomas, Znaniński and Chałasiński point to the creation of new values and attitudes at the juncture of tradition and modernity: valuing work and respecting manual work; the growing importance of individual autonomy (especially for women for whom the widespread growth of kindergartens in the USA provided assistance with childcare), the increasing significance of independence among both men and women; acceptance of those who chose not to marry; rationality about spending and budgeting; belief in life success; and changing attitudes towards the Catholic Church leading to changes in religious practices whereby individual effort and achievement were recognised and praised. All authors argued that this fusion of tradition and modernisation in transnational space had many unintended consequences. One of them, strongly underlined by Thomas and Znaniński, was the reorganisation and sometimes fragmentation of traditional bonds in a community, with side-effects (called 'deviances' by the authors) such as homelessness and alcoholism but also theft and other crimes which migrants themselves saw as 'moral holidays during migration' because they were no longer under the social control of their local communities of origin.

**Table 1. Summary of social remittances in sociological migration writings of the 19th and early 20th centuries**

Types of social remittances (Levitt 1998)	Impact on sending country Krzywicki (1891 a, b), <i>Ludwik Krzywicki...</i> (1939)	Impact on sending country Duda-Dziewierz (1938)	Origin–destination circulation Thomas, Znaniecki (1918/1920)	Origin–destination circulation Chalasiński (1936)
Normative structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emancipation of social roles, especially those assigned to women</li> <li>• Blurring of ‘Polishness’ (during partition of Poland) but migration helped mentally to release Polish society from feudal yoke</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of non-conformist attitudes</li> <li>• Individualisation of attitudes: thinking about one’s own life, not only of family success</li> <li>• Rationalisation of social attitudes: social criticism of Catholic Church; civic attitudes</li> <li>• New economic attitudes: investments in land as entrepreneurship; economic values</li> <li>• Manual work as a value: respect for manual work; opportunity to build up social position through manual work</li> <li>• Ideas to create town from Babica village</li> <li>• Appreciation for entrepreneurial farmers and craftsmen; opposition to serfdom in the village</li> <li>• Development of secular sense of community not based on religion; building up common cultural (non-religious) centre in the village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of new values and attitudes (at the juncture of tradition and modernity)</li> <li>• Growing importance of individual autonomy</li> <li>• Escape from social control of social group (non-conformist attitudes, sometimes new deviations)</li> <li>• Acceptance of single state; individual responsibility</li> <li>• Style of household management as a value</li> <li>• Rational economic attitude connected to investments in land but also in education</li> <li>• New social types: individualistic, oriented towards own life success, individual responsibility, self-made</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New value for work, appreciation of manual work</li> <li>• Individualisation of life</li> <li>• Creation of transnational identity (being ‘here and there’); no roots in destination; strong sense of return (broken by WWII)</li> </ul>
Systems of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dress, eating, household maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diffusion of social patterns: outfit, household furnishing, home environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-existence of old and new family practices; both daily rhythms of life; use of new equipment, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in religious practices towards valuing individual effort and work achievement</li> </ul>
Social capital	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reorganisation of family bonds and local community (mobile and sedentary population): transnational families with limited ways of communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in families (absence of breadwinners); new models of family (greater acceptance of divorce and not marrying), neighbourhood, local community (more individualism)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reorganisation of family bonds</li> </ul>



To sum up, scholars had already touched on the changing norms, practices and social capital resulting from migration long before the term ‘social remittances’ was coined (cf. Grabowska *et al.*, in press). The findings of these early migration studies can be summarised according to Levitt’s three types of remittance (see Table 1).

### *Contemporary Polish studies*

Below we will again use the three types of social remittances to classify and examine the social consequences of contemporary migration flows from Poland.

*Normative structures.* Elrick (2008) in his studies of two locations in Poland, argued that in addition to the economic consequences of migration, there are social and cultural consequences for the cohesion of the community and the lives of its members. He pointed out that emerging ‘cultures of migration’ can be seen in communities with a history of migration and high volume of outflow (cf. Massey Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino and Taylor 1993). Migration culture after 1989 seems to be taking over some functions of communist-era factory and state farm cultures in local communities, especially in places where incomplete migration patterns still persist (Okólski 2012b). This is particularly connected to the structuring function of the rhythm of life of local inhabitants (seasonal migration; visiting families left behind), but also going for ‘shifts’ (people replace each other after some period of working abroad, e.g. in household services, agriculture and construction resembling shifts in communist factories). Migration, similar to the work in the communist factory or state farm, becomes a norm in such a local community with the culture of migratory- majority of inhabitants work there.

Elrick (2008) also found that migration is changing care arrangements in the two villages he studied due to the temporary absence of members of local communities. One important change is the substitution of mutual support provided by neighbours with paid professional help. As a consequence, informal support structures are being replaced by commercial support systems which may create a ‘commercialisation of life’ (Elrick 2008: 1515).

For traditional Polish society where the Catholic religion predominates, migration also has an impact in terms of changing gender roles and family relations. White (2011a) stresses that, in the Poland of the 1990s, the predominant pattern of migration was incomplete migration (Jaźwińska and Okólski 2001) mainly involving people from small towns and villages (‘hidden’ migration in Elrick’s analysis). This type of migration reinforced conventional family gender roles, with women becoming even more responsible for raising children largely on their own, while men’s parental responsibilities were mostly focused on earning money.

By contrast, a phenomenon often noted in various analyses of post-EU enlargement migration flows is that, when women migrate, traditional family roles change or in some cases are even reversed within households (White 2011a). Women gain more self-esteem and self-confidence, mainly because they improve their own financial standing. They come to feel that gender roles should be better balanced within the household. Given that Polish migrants are strongly attached to their communities (Kaczmarczyk 2008), a change towards more balanced gender roles in families may also take the form of a remittance applied as a new social norm in local communities. White’s (2011a: 93) survey in Podkarpacie showed that migrants who had returned from the UK and young people under 25 were less supportive of traditional migration gender roles, possibly reflecting a preference for ‘partner-like marriages’ (Fuszara 2005) where the roles of men and women are more equally shared. Moreover, in localities where many women have migrated, there was a general understanding that in some situations, wives were more suited than husbands to take on the role of migrant and main breadwinner (White 2011a: 96–97). This change stems from the economic necessity for a division of roles and labour in households where women migrate, but also from direct observation of lifestyles in Western societies. White

suggests that social and economic change in Poland, together with social remittances from Western countries, may be contributing to a situation where ‘rigid gender roles (father = breadwinner; mother = chief parent) will be eroded, at least partially’ (2011a: 92). She suggests (2011a: 233) that ‘changing views about gender roles might be a form of social remittance, but only in the sense that Western ideas may reinforce new ideas about gender roles already circulating among younger and better-educated sections of the Polish population’. Pine’s (2007) research in a Polish mountain location showed that the migration of mothers is widely accepted because hard work and economic responsibility are ingrained in their sense of motherhood.

The report *Social Consequences of Post-Accession Migration of the Population of Poland* (Slany and Solga 2014) highlights that transnational families reveal a multiplicity of social roles. Migrating mothers in particular have to deal with the feelings of loneliness and helplessness experienced as a result of separation from their children along with taking on the multiple roles of distant parent, household manager and carer of elderly parents. However, many migrating women, despite changing gender roles and the increasing level of their agency (taking responsibility for the material well-being of family, the economic support of children and intense transnational communication), find themselves unable to change their attitude to the traditional mother role and continue taking entire responsibility for the eventual effects of separation and transnational relations, even where the fathers have been left behind with the children (Ryan 2010). Analysis also shows that fathers who are left behind with children when women migrate tend to seek help and sometimes shift responsibilities to other members of the family – grandparents or other relatives. If mothers stay behind when men migrate, they tend to raise the children themselves, taking on the everyday responsibilities of the absent fathers. But some researchers question the extent of the emancipation of women left behind, as they are usually still financially dependent on uncertain money transfers and *ad hoc* visits by fathers to the families based on patriarchal authority, obedience and discipline.

Migration has other effects on family relations. White (2011a) has pointed out several consequences of migration for family life when one part of the family is left behind in a sending country: loss or weakening of bonds with other members of family; loss of parental control over children; or the abandonment of children as a result of migration by both parents. There are also cases of children who were abandoned as a result of parental migration abroad (referred to in media discourse as ‘Euro-orphans’). These children tend to suffer from loneliness and a loss of emotional and material security (Niewiadomska 2010). Kozak (2010) posits that in families with one or both parents abroad, the ‘sailor syndrome’ of psychological or emotional mismatch between migrant and family members left at home may occur on return.<sup>6</sup> However, children are not the only ones to suffer from family separation; elderly parents of middle-aged migrants may also experience negative consequences. White (2011a: 125) has argued that although there are more and more accessible services, especially certain forms of care-giving at a distance, the emotional consequences for elderly parents left behind by migrants can be quite severe (see also Krzyżowski 2013). This may be due to the fact that it is still not common in Poland to place elderly parents in residential homes, there is rather a strong norm of direct involvement in care.

In sum, research on the family and changing gender roles shows differentiated consequences of migration. On the one hand there is evidence that migration transforms traditional gender roles and equalises the household division of labour, on the other hand the absence of parents may have a negative impact on family relations and care arrangements for those left behind. Acknowledging and understanding some negative or dysfunctional aspects of migration does not imply that individual migrants are to blame for them: they are consequences of the structure of international migration. Besides, migration is often not an individual but a collective strategy of (transnational) households and extended families based on economic, social and personal considerations (Stark 1991; Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara 2009; Ryan 2010).

Alongside changing norms with respect to gender relations and care arrangements, scholars have also pointed out that migration has changed norms of social mobility aspiration. Elrick (2008) argues that mobility has become the dominant value for the perception of life chances. Migration has become the main vehicle for social mobility and the main strategy for escaping from social deprivation. Migration resources have helped people to improve their social status. Elrick also found that migrating parents seek to compensate for their absence by investing in extra foreign-language lessons for their children left behind to enable them to work abroad in the future should the local labour markets be adverse.

Changing social mobility norms can also be seen in studies of the careers of non-seasonal Polish migrants engaging in migration on a longer-term basis (Grabowska-Lusińska 2012; Grabowska, in press). Some migrants realise that appreciation from and promotion by foreign employers (especially as qualified workers) provides opportunities for further social mobility at home, especially in connection with setting up their own business. One of the unintended consequences of labour migration connected to social mobility is that many migrants from Poland, especially those who have worked abroad in jobs below their formal qualifications, realise what ‘they don’t ever want to do in their professional lives’. They also regret not planning their career before migration, by comparison with their foreign counterparts with the same level of formal education (Grabowska-Lusińska 2012). Aspiring to social mobility at home is also connected to migrants’ financial attainments abroad. The more they earn abroad in the short term, the more they can aspire to improve their relative position in local social structures. This is one of the more direct manifest functions of migration.

But the behaviours of migrants in the receiving labour markets have other effects. One is the widespread phenomenon of deskilling that accompanies cross-border mobility (Morokvasic and de Tinguy 1993; Erel 2003; Currie 2007; Grabowska-Lusińska 2012; Piętko, Clark and Canton 2012; Trevena 2013; Grabowska, in press). The term ‘occupational skidding’ has been coined to describe the drop in job status experienced by migrants after migration (Morawska and Spohn 1997: 36). Although many migrants are well educated, they accept work for low wages in occupations outside their formal training. Morokvasic and de Tinguy (1993: 245) have highlighted the ‘brain waste’ of people from CEE economies because their formal qualifications and skills are out of date. Currie (2007: 72) reports that the majority of her respondents from Poland recognised their diminished social status and expressed high levels of disappointment with their social ranking in the UK. When highly educated migrants are willing to accept low-skilled jobs for a short period of time, the experience can be refreshing and provide career motivation. If, however, they are stuck in such a position for a prolonged period, it can devalue their skills or render them out of date, which may be a problem when they attempt to return to their previous, usually formal professions (Grabowska-Lusińska 2012). But migration also enables reflexivity about working life which may impact social mobility (Grabowska, in press, following Archer 2007), making migrants aware of life skills acquired even when working below their formal qualifications.

*Practices.* Morawska (2001) argues that migration is a process of structuring through migrants’ everyday social practices. She also claims that migration teaches migrants to value their labour and income: ‘This newly acquired orientation-cum-practice, a commitment to hard work in conditions promising good financial rewards, becomes part of migrants’ coping strategies in the capitalist world and, over time, an integral component of a cultural structure of migration. As part of the available culture of migration this resource enables, in turn, other migrants to make well balanced decisions and take subjective actions regarding income-seeking in the West’ (Morawska 2001: 21).

With regard to work practices, Grabowska (in press) found that according to the 2011 Polish census nearly one in two Polish migrants with tertiary education and one-third with medium-level qualifications did not undertake work abroad that accorded with their formal qualifications. Therefore, they were unable to bring home manifest new qualifications. However, they had gained ‘tacit skills’ through work practices, such as

teamwork, handling multiple tasks in complex and demanding environments, prioritising, planning and learning (Grabowska, in press).

Migrants also learn specific transnational information practices through digital media. One of the unintended consequences of transnational information practices, driven by strong emotional bonds with sending localities, is that both migrants and their peers left behind master everyday digital media usage (Ignatowicz 2011; Dekker and Engbersen 2014). Migrants want to be 'virtually local', even maintaining stronger local identities at a distance than they had before they left (Komito and Bates 2011). Peers left behind want updates about their everyday lives. This everyday talk about experiences in receiving, often multicultural, societies may serve as a conveyor belt for the cultural diffusion of objects, ideas and practices (Bakewell *et al.* 2013). White (2011b) calls this phenomenon of migration from small Polish towns and villages to small towns and villages in the UK 'translocality', referring also to translocalised relations. Migrants become, often in unintended ways, 'practicing actors of globalisation' (Kennedy 2010); some of them diffuse innovations acquired from rich contacts with receiving societies, others just unintentionally create local links (White 2011b).

Physical mobility practices demonstrate important aspects of kinship rituals and ceremonies (such as christenings, First Communion, weddings and funerals) ordered through migration and mobility, and in particular of the centrality of family networks (Ignatowicz 2011: 38). The practice of travelling for weddings, funerals or christenings has major significance: 'More than simply continuing and recognising the religious and cultural traditions, mobility as an obligation acts as a motivation for the maintenance of social relations' (Ignatowicz 2011: 42). Mobility patterns also create a space to exhibit material and non-material success, but also a space of diffusing, rather à la carte, new practices brought from abroad, such as wedding and christening customs and outfits, and fashion.

Migration impacts the practices of family lives and family relations of those who migrate (Levitt 1998), and this is also true of circular migration, where the person is in a cycle of going abroad to work and then returning to the home country for some time. Kurczewski and Fuszara (2012), in their studies on traditional patriarchal Silesian families in the Opolskie Region, argued that, on the one hand, the entire family has to adjust to the rhythm established by migration, and that on the other hand family members, mostly women, become more independent and take over the responsibilities that had previously belonged to the migrating husband or wife. This creates new practices in households affected by the absence of those who had previously had roles in a family. These practices include women starting to drive, organising property refurbishment or building a new home, going to schools for parent-teacher meetings, having sex education talks with children, and taking children to after-school activities.

As pointed out by Social Consequences of Post-Accession Migration of the Population of Poland (Slany and Solga 2014), new transnational practices of caring for children and elderly parents left behind are emerging. As regards transnational care of children left behind, parents want to be involved via Skype or phone calls in children's education (doing homework, monitoring on-line teacher information if available) and diet (on-line shopping for children), and in bringing or sending them new technological equipment. When migrant parents visit communities of origin they usually pay visits to schools and meet teachers.

As regards transnational care of elderly parents, three types of practices were listed in the 2014 report: 1) practices which remain the same despite the distance, namely emotional support (via Skype and telephone), giving advice, help seeking legal, health and services information; 2) practices which are modified in transnational spaces, such as monitoring the situation of elderly parents via Skype, on-line or phone booking of medical appointments, on-line shopping, organising paid daily assistance with cleaning and cooking, paying bills online; and 3) new practices emerging in transnational social spaces such as financial help to the elderly parent

(internet or Western Union money transfers), introducing new labour-saving devices from destination countries, consulting medical specialists abroad, sending medicines from abroad, and teaching elderly parents how to use computers, tablets, the internet and Skype.

Kilkey, Plomien and Perrons (2013) also examined changing practices of fathering as a result of migration by Polish fathers: from breadwinning, passive fathering to more conscious, active fathering at a distance. They highlighted that migration also uncovers tensions between breadwinning and fathering, and various practices deployed to reconcile these tensions. They see fathering as a latent element of a global care chain, compared with the manifest roles of mothers. Fathers too have attachments and commitments to their children which go beyond mere breadwinning. Migrating fathers are caught between material and non-material aspects of their parenting with the bigger focus on the first aspect. Experience of transnational, distant fathering, especially for those fathers who are separated or divorced and have fractured relations with their children left behind, also made them more alive to emotional relations and everyday practices with children in newly created families in a receiving country (Kilkey *et al.* 2013).

*Social capital.* The analysis of social capital as a type of social remittance needs to take into account that the content of social capital is highly contextualised by nature and difficult to generalise (Trutkowski and Mandes 2005). This principle is particularly important for Poland, which has been undergoing complex social, political and economic transitions. Some analysts suggest that Polish society still contains aspects of the communist-era mentality, behaviour and actions, and that it has a very low level of social capital compared to other European societies. Studies on incomplete migration from Poland have also included analyses of migratory social capital in relation to the resources facilitating migration and relations with owners of these resources. In order to analyse migratory social capital, Górný and Stola (2001) used data from six ethno-survey studies conducted in Poland (Lubniany, Monki, Namyslow, Nowy Targ, Perlejewo and Warsaw) between 1994 and 1996. They showed that migratory social capital tended to be concentrated in specific local communities of origin and destinations to which Polish migrants gravitated. Within social migration networks people indirectly and directly helped each other, which sustained the scale of migration networks and the importance of social capital. The sustainability of migratory social capital became especially important for local communities with intense back-and-forth migration. In circulation, migration meant not an escape from a social community but a temporary absence, and maintaining social relations with friends, family members and neighbours was highly important. Family members left behind expected reciprocity from migrants because they looked after the latter's children, households and elderly relatives during their absence. It resembled capital investment which a beneficiary migrant needed somehow to pay back. This created reciprocity exchange, bounded solidarity between generations and enforceable trust (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). Górný and Stola (2001) also found that the more independent and self-sustainable a migrant, the less social capital they needed. Stola and Górný concluded that social capital could be also seen as a social credit in the form of more or less unselfish actions towards members of social networks. Migratory social capital replaced in post-communist local communities the cash assistance and loans which had functioned in the communist factories. The only difference was that migratory social capital was based on non-material aspects and social trust (Górný and Stola 2001) which migrants could also remit from abroad.

Wieruszewska (2007) studied migrants' social capital in three Polish villages, in Opolskie, Podlaskie and Podkarpackie regions (mostly post-accession migration). Their analyses showed that migration can somehow generate or even increase social trust (see also Górný and Stola 2001). Polish migrants learned that trust building is a process of proving their reliability, trustworthiness and credibility. This, metaphorically, opens doors everywhere. Migrants understand that trust is an important mechanism in the everyday labour market because

it can promote business between partners. In the village communities of Wieruszewska's study (2007), increased social trust after migration was mostly directed towards family members and relatives, but to a lesser extent also to fellow villagers. This finding highlights some unintended consequences of migration, even if somewhat limited in impact, especially as they counter the widespread distrust inherited from the communist regime. However, on the other hand Wieruszewska (2007) have also shown that labour migrants may remit modern values of individualism from abroad, and that the role of social capital in connection with neighbourliness has declined. The rise of more individualistic lifestyles can be seen among the young.<sup>7</sup> As expressed by Putnam (2002), international migration may lead to the weakening of bonding social capital and the strengthening of bridging social capital in local communities.

The strengthening of bridging social capital is noticeable in the social remittances of migrants that relate to forms of voluntary help (Wieruszewska 2007). Migrants admitted that after migration they felt more obliged to help others, especially their families and relatives but also, to a lesser extent, their local communities. More than half of migrants said that their general involvement in helping others increased as a result of migration. Migrants suggested that people who have more money as a result of migration should also donate more money to private and public institutions such as churches, schools, kindergartens and arts centres, thus contributing to the building of civil society.

**Table 2. Contemporary Polish labour migration and different types of social remittances**

Level of social remittances	Social remittances		
	Norms	Practices	Social capital
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norms of equal gender roles and division of labour in households</li> <li>• New family models with distant members (transnational families)</li> <li>• Migration reveals multiplicity of gender roles: women as productive and reproductive forces; fathers as active parents, not only breadwinners; but also migrants as workers, parents, household managers, carers for elderly (mostly women)</li> <li>• Occupational aspirations and 'occupational skidding'</li> <li>• Changing attitudes towards mobility; mobility as a social value</li> <li>• Present members or institutions taking up responsibilities of absent members in household and communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning to work</li> <li>• Tacit skills related to the workplace</li> <li>• Digital skills</li> <li>• New senses of kinship, family rituals and ceremonies impacted by rhythms of migration</li> <li>• Transnational child and elderly care practices (on-line shopping; on-line monitoring school and life situation)</li> <li>• Changing practices of mothering and fathering</li> <li>• Changing household division of labour and family practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generating social trust in some local communities</li> <li>• Generating more individualisation, especially among migrating youth</li> <li>• Migratory social capital replacing communist factory cash assistance and loans but based on non-material reciprocal exchange and enforced group trust</li> <li>• Increase in voluntary help and citizen participation</li> </ul>
Collective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norms of equal gender roles and division of labour in households</li> <li>• Migration as vehicle for social mobility in local communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing household division of labour and family practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary collective actions to create (semi-) public institutions that strengthen civil society</li> </ul>

Table 2 summarises the major aspects of contemporary social remittances discussed above. Most social remittances relate to the transmission of individual behaviours and values and exchanges between friends, family members and neighbours. Collective social remittances are less common or even rare in Polish local communities. However, the aggregation of individual social remittances may create specific *collective outcomes*, such as more equal gender roles and changing fathering practices. This overview can also be seen as an inventory of the latent functions of labour migration for particular sections of Polish society.

## Discussion

This article has combined Merton's functional analysis with Levitt's work on social remittances to gain a better understanding of the social consequences of temporary labour migration for Poland. The complex ways in which temporary labour migration is transforming and reshaping Polish society call for an in-depth analysis that goes beyond the more obvious manifest economic functions of migration. In this article we have analysed the unintended social consequences of migration from Poland through the conceptual lenses of the mechanism of social remittances. For this undertaking we examined early (19th- and 20th-century) as well as contemporary migration studies. This analysis shows that there are many things which people continuously bring to their communities of origin as a result of migration or circulation between destination and origin, such as more equal gender roles, changing household division of labour, individualistic lifestyles, new skills and sources of social capital, changing economic rationalities and emerging forms of collective action for the development of civil society. The analysis also shows that migration can produce functional and dysfunctional outcomes. The clearest examples are the differentiated effects on the family and on civil society. The study also shows that contemporary forms of digital communication bring distant family members closer to each other and generate new transnational practises of caring for children and elderly parents left behind.

The analysis of the mechanism of social remittances presented in this article enables us to understand the enduring relevance of temporary, back-and-forth labour migration for the sending society. The social remittances produced by temporary labour migration may help particular sections of Polish society adapt to changing global, European and national conditions (Castles *et al.* 2014; Slany and Solga 2014). Social remittances in the form of the transmission of norms, values and practices may also help not only to overcome the effects of the political and social transformation of Polish society, but also to contribute to the transformation of stable, ordered lives into lives of greater uncertainty and insecurity resulting from globalisation (Bauman 1998; Hughes, Fergusson 2000). Moreover, temporary labour migration also has its darker side, and calls for targeted social and economic policies that support family structures and the careers of migrants and their families (Slany and Solga 2014).

This article is based on a secondary analysis of historical and contemporary studies of Polish labour migration. What is missing is a systematic study of the actual transmission of social remittances. Under what conditions do we see changes in norms, practices and social capital? How do individual acts of social remitting produce collective changes in norms, practices and social capital? To answer these fundamental questions systematic multi-sited studies in destination and origin countries are needed to document in detail the process and impact of social remittances within the European Union.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Our analysis is also in line with those authors who differentiate between methodological and substantive functionalism (Boudon 1990: 136). Merton's contribution is that he offers a methodological framework to

document and interpret social consequences of human phenomena that are important for the continued existence of institutions (Calhoun 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Merton (1967: 52) states: ‘Functional analysis in sociology (...) calls for a ‘concrete and detailed’ account of the mechanisms which operate to perform a designated function. This refers, not to psychological, but to social mechanisms (e.g., role-segmentation, insulation of institutional demands, hierarchic ordering of values, social division of labour, ritual and ceremonial enactments, etc.)’.

<sup>3</sup> Massey used the concept of functions to explain manifest and latent functions of a Mexican migrant soccer club: ‘One of the two urban communities under study provides a particularly good example of how an organization apparently unrelated to the migrant process, a soccer club, has been adapted to serve the needs of a bi-national migrant community. Although its manifest functions are recreational, its latent functions are to strengthen and expand the social connections within the network, thereby supporting the migrant enterprise’ (Massey 1986: 107). Nearly seventy years earlier, Thomas and Znaniecki (1918/1920) made the same kind of observations with respect to the functions of the Polish peasant cooperative institutions in Chicago (see Merton 1967: 62).

<sup>4</sup> It is important to bring in temporality as a dimension of human agency and reflexivity (Archer and Tritter 2000:10–12). Merton (1967: 70) also acknowledged that latent functions may over time become generally recognised by the public, such as the latent functions of consumption (bringing status and creating distinction).

<sup>5</sup> Recently, the Polish Academy of Sciences published a report (Slany and Solga 2014) on the social consequences of post-accession migration from Poland.

<sup>6</sup> It can also be argued that migration only reveals family dysfunctions that existed long before migration, and that parents were unable to take care of their children even before going abroad. ‘There are plenty of children like that in ‘ordinary’ families where no one has ever migrated’ (White 2011a).

<sup>7</sup> The rise of more individualistic lifestyles does not imply that the family is a declining institution. The family still plays a central role in individual mobility (see Botterill 2013).

## Funding

The article is also based on findings coming from the project *Diffusion of Culture Through Social Remittances between Poland and The United Kingdom* funded by National Science Centre Poland (Grant No. 179068).

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# The Complexity of Return: Socio-Cultural Remittances of Highly Skilled Belarusians

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*This article investigates the post-return experiences of highly skilled Belarusian professionals. I concentrate on the socio-cultural aspects of highly skilled migration and view returnees as carriers of new experiences, ideas, and practices by studying the ways in which they apply various socio-cultural remittances to the different spheres of their lives. In particular, I argue that the formation and transmission of socio-cultural remittances are strongly heterogeneous and selective processes, which manifest themselves to varying degrees not only in different people, but also in different aspects of people's lives. The analysis of several socio-cultural remittances in private and public spheres shows that in some cases the socio-cultural remittances display strong gender differences. Moreover, the highly skilled returnees appear to be proactive remitters: some of them re-interpret and transform the socio-cultural remittances before transmitting them. The research draws on the analysis of 43 in-depth interviews with highly skilled professionals who returned to Belarus after long periods of time spent abroad.*

*Keywords: highly skilled migration; return migration; social remittances; Belarus*

## Introduction

In this article, I analyse the socio-cultural remittances of highly skilled voluntary return migrants. I assume that abroad experiences increase the complexity of people's attitudes. Through emigration, a person learns new ways of thinking and behaving that enrich her social outlooks and allow a greater choice of alternatives. Having returned to their home society, returnees apply their new visions and attitudes to local contexts and by doing so transmit them to people surrounding them. Thus, 'socio-cultural remittances' occur. Nevertheless, the transfer of new attitudes is not homogeneous across the different spheres of people's life. While in some spheres people tend to apply values and ideas adopted abroad, they are reluctant to do the same in other spheres; they might even devalue the newly learnt norms.

This study focuses on some socio-cultural remittances related to (broadly defined) cosmopolitan attitudes. They are usually conceived of as a particular worldview characterised by a set of values and norms: prospects of global democratisation and justice, capacity to mediate between different cultures and affinity to dialogue, tolerance and respect, awareness of diversity and difference, and the decentring of values (Beck 2002;

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Roudometof 2005; Appiah 2006; Mau, Mewes and Zimmermann 2008). Cosmopolitanism is primarily a European phenomenon,<sup>1</sup> that is why I will refer to these values as Western values.

In this paper, I show that the transmission of cosmopolitan ideas and values is a highly selective process that manifests itself in different forms and with different intensity. I provide evidence for this selectivity in different contexts, such as the returnees' general attitude towards interpersonal relations, family and sentimental relations, views on education system, and opinions about politics.

Overall, I argue that socio-cultural remittances are heterogeneous in how they are manifested in the different spheres of private and public life. First, the socio-cultural remittances within the family and sentimental life display strong gender differences since men and women transmit almost opposite views on and behaviours related to marriage and parenting. Second, in some isolated cases, socio-cultural remittances concerning political views assume a 'reactive' form: after being initially highly valued, the norms and ideas learnt from Western societies are re-interpreted and transformed resulting in devaluation or even negation of their original meaning.

### **Theoretical framework**

In the past, migration scholars focused almost exclusively on socio-economic changes occurring in both receiving and sending countries. Recently, however, they have paid much closer attention to socio-cultural concerns. It is commonly believed that returnees contribute to the development of their home countries<sup>2</sup> by transferring different types of capital, such as financial capital (monetary savings), human capital (e.g., training and work experience), and social capital (e.g., competences in building relations with people from different cultures, access to different sources of information thanks to their language skills) (see, for example, Taylor 1976; Thomas-Hope 1999; de Haas 2007; Ammassari 2009). Along with the assets of financial, human, and social capitals, it is also ideas, practices, and know-how that contribute to social change in home countries. The latter set of notions have been combined to form the concept of 'social remittances', broadly defined as 'ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital' moving across the borders (Levitt 1998: 926). The main idea behind this concept is that alongside money transfers, many migrants convey to their home societies the non-economic assets accumulated while living abroad. Moreover, the concept of socio-cultural remittances emphasises the proactive nature of returnees who not only carry, but also rework and re-interpret practices and ideas they have experienced abroad. Consistently with Boccagni and Decimo (2013), I consider economic remittances to be embedded in a broader socio-cultural context and will use the term 'socio-cultural remittances' to denote all non-material assets imported by migrants to their home societies. Often these new assets represent 'Western-style' values, ideas, and ways of life that are gradually spreading in less developed societies through migration and more general globalisation processes (Levitt 1998, 2001; Arowolo 2000; Baldassar 2001, 2007; Duval 2004; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011, 2013).

After almost 20 years of theoretical and empirical refinements, scholars generally agree on the typology of socio-cultural remittances including normative structures – ideas, beliefs, and values; systems of practice – actions and activities shaped by normative structures; and social capital (Levitt 1998). In this research, I focus primarily on the first two types of socio-cultural remittances. Socio-cultural remittances have several descriptive dimensions. Firstly, socio-cultural remittances may have both positive and negative consequences; secondly, many authors distinguish between individual and collective socio-cultural remittances; thirdly, socio-cultural remittances may scale up and scale out by moving through different levels and domains (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). Finally, socio-cultural remittances have a circular character: people's experiences before migrating strongly influence their lives in host countries, which then shape what they remit back to their home countries (Levitt 1998; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011, 2013).

Considering the circularity of socio-cultural remittances, the pre- and post-migration intellectual, social, and cultural resources play a crucial role in the adoption and subsequent transmission of new ideas and behaviours. This means that highly skilled migrants represent a very important component in the mosaic of socio-cultural remitters. This study focuses specifically on highly skilled return migration, since ‘home visits, and especially return on a more or less permanent basis, provide a privileged setting where the ‘baggage’ they [migrants] bring back can be appreciated’ (Boccagni and Decimo 2013: 8). Returnees come back to their home societies and remit the adopted ideas and attitudes not only through verbal communication, but also by sharing their experience with, and setting an example for, people surrounding them. New ideas brought from abroad inform many aspects of returnees’ lives. Thus, the study of post-return experiences combined with the focus on highly skilled migrants may provide useful insights into content and meaning, as well as processes of formation and transmission of socio-cultural remittances. In her seminal article on social remittances, Levitt (1998: 944) makes an appeal for further research on social remittances ‘in cases involving urban-to-urban migration, lower levels of economic dependence, or countries that are geographically and culturally farther apart’, which have been largely ignored by social researchers. Studies to date have focused mainly on low-skilled remitters acting between the wealthy Western host countries and the less developed home countries.<sup>3</sup> Under such circumstances, the transmission of socio-cultural remittances seems to occur mostly in the form of mirroring the Western values, ideas and behaviours, which results in (to some extent) homogeneous distribution of newly adopted views across the various life spheres. In case of highly skilled people from socio-culturally developed contexts, the process of formation and transmission of socio-cultural remittances is neither obvious nor straightforward. In order to explore the complexities of highly skilled people’s lifestyles and to study the ways in which they apply socio-cultural remittances to the different spheres of their lives, I focus on post-return experiences of highly skilled professionals in the Belarusian context.

### **Research context**

Belarus regained independence in 1991, after the collapse of the USSR. Unlike other former Soviet countries, Belarus has passed the transition period in a relatively smooth way enjoying a relatively stable economic situation. That is why the country has never experienced mass emigration processes of the kind that happened in Russia, Ukraine, and other former Soviet countries. This is not to say that Belarusian people are immobile. According to the Migration Policy Centre (2013), around the year 2012 almost 500 000 Belarusian-born people resided abroad. However, if only Belarusian citizens are taken into account, the numbers are much smaller: Eurostat data show that by 2014 about 70 000 Belarusian citizens had taken up legal residence in the European Union. From 1990 to 2009, the main receiving countries were Russia and Ukraine. Traditionally, the most popular destination countries beyond CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) were Israel, the USA, Canada, and Germany. Cases of emigration to these countries formed 60 per cent of all emigration cases to non-CIS countries in 2009 (Bobrova, Shakhotska and Shymanovich 2012). According to official statistics, people with tertiary education migrate more actively compared to others. The proportion of people with tertiary education among emigrants is about 30 per cent; almost half of them choose Western destinations (Danzner and Dietz 2013). The migration patterns in Belarus are sensitive to both gender and education levels. Men with secondary education (builders, specialised workers, etc.) prefer Eastern destinations (Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan) while the majority of migrants moving towards the European Union and Northern America are females with a tertiary education degree. To some extent, Belarus faces the challenge of the ‘highly educated brides’ drain (Shakhotska 2009).



The official statistics show a high intensity of emigration to non-CIS countries in the end of the 1990s and its stabilisation towards the end of the 2000s. In contrast, the Eurostat data indicate that the number of Belarusians living in the EU increased considerably within this period, particularly in Germany, Italy, and the Czech Republic (Bobrova *et al.* 2012). These differences might be explained by the Belarusian accounting system, which allows a person to contemporaneously maintain her permanent residence in Belarus and obtain a residence permit elsewhere. In this way Belarus has no records about people permanently residing abroad and, consequently, has no reliable statistics on return migration. The latter, however, is growing mostly because of return of international students upon completion of their degrees in universities abroad. Currently, Belarus has a limited number of legislative tools dealing with the issues of diaspora and return migration. These include the *Programme for Development of Confessional Sphere, National Relations and Cooperation with Compatriots Living Abroad for 2011–2015*, the *National Programme of Demographic Security 2011–2015*, and Law No. 162–3 ‘On Belarusians living abroad’ adopted in 2014. The latter contains a set of provisions aimed at supporting the integration of people having Belarusian roots but it does not contain any specific measure regarding return migration. In fact, the law has received multiple criticisms because of its excessive generality and the absence of concrete policies on collaboration with Belarusian diasporas abroad.

### **Methodology**

This article is based on the analysis of 43 in-depth semi-structured interviews with highly skilled Belarusian returnees, collected in 2014 in Belarus.<sup>4</sup> The informants have been reached by means of mass media as well as personal and online social networks. All of them have completed at least one level of tertiary education and/or work as professionals and all of them have spent at least five years abroad.<sup>5</sup> The interviews were conducted at informants’ homes as well as in public places. The average length of interviews was about two hours; both Russian and Belarusian languages were used. The interviews focused on two main topics: a retrospective look on the informants’ life abroad and an exploration of their return experiences (from the decision-making process to their impressions, feelings and today’s lifestyle). The major interest was in how these people think they have changed after living abroad and in which way they transmit their new knowledge and experience to other people in Belarus after their return. Among the informants there were 12 women and 31 men aged from 25 to 57 years (34 years is the median age). Ten informants were engaged in a sentimental relationship, 21 were married, and 12 were single. The distribution by qualification field is as follows: 6 informants graduated in natural sciences (biology, chemistry, and physics), 4 informants graduated in arts and philosophy, 13 specialise in computer sciences and information technologies, 19 graduate in social sciences (economics, psychology, business, marketing, political sciences). All the data was analysed by the qualitative research software ATLAS.ti 7. The participants’ names have been changed.

### **Post-return self-perceptions**

International migration and various cross-border activities are some of the most obvious expressions of globalisation. Migrants’ exposure to different cultural sources gives rise to the emergence of intermediate ‘hybridised’ cultures (Baumann 1996; Hannerz 1996; Pieterse 1996) and adoption of Western values and norms under a common label of cosmopolitanism (Roudometof 2005; Appiah 2006; Norris and Inglehart 2009). The adoption of cosmopolitan values requires a profound transformation of self-understanding and self-positioning in relation to other people and the world.

Throughout the interviews I often encountered evidence of self-perceived internal change that has taken place in the highly skilled returnees during their experience abroad. Naturally, all of them noted that the possibility to live abroad was a very good and valuable experience in terms of personal and professional growth. However, while for some living abroad became just a worthwhile adventure, for others the contact with foreign cultures meant deep changes in their attitudes towards life and people in general. Many informants repeatedly acknowledged that while abroad they became both more self-confident and more tolerant. Indeed, tolerance appeared to be the main component of cosmopolitan views remitted by the highly skilled Belarusian returnees. Many of them claimed to have become more tolerant to diversity, less prone to stereotypes, more balanced in their judgements and flexible in relations with others. As Varvara puts it:

*I would not say that I've changed a lot – I like the same things I liked before. Nevertheless, I saw many people from other cultures, with other orientations. I've become more open-minded in terms of the different human behaviours. I think I used to be more ignorant; I believed in some stereotypes. (...) I've learnt to have a calm attitude towards the differences between people and to appreciate them (Varvara, 31: 46).<sup>6</sup>*

Many other informants have expressed similar ideas about their tolerance and appreciation of different kinds of diversity, from sexual orientation and physical disability to race, religion, and cultural particularity. Another respondent, Artem, also thinks that the international experience has allowed him to develop cosmopolitan values and attitudes. He has conveyed this idea in a very clear way:

*I am not changed. What I had before has developed. I have not changed my opinions, but they have become wider and more global. I am not sure if I would have developed differently, if I had never moved away from here. However, abroad I developed an understanding of different countries. People from all over the world live there. Different countries, different cultures, but we are the children of one planet. This idea has not changed; it has just become closer to me. I understood there is a kind of chauvinism inside us. No, we are all children of one planet. (...) You see, I said this thing about the children of the planet, but it is just another label. I think that such labels do not exist. We are those who put them on ourselves. It is just a limitation. Yes, other people may have another accent or may have seen other cartoons when they were children. People can be girls and boys, and from being one or another, they do not become less people. It is the same (Artem, 37: 55).*

It is hard to say exactly what mechanism underlies the interior evolution perceived by the returnees. These people have spent many years abroad – they have become older and wiser (or at least more experienced), and of course the more discreet attitude to people may be the result of growing up. Nevertheless, as they themselves claimed, the international experience and contacts with other cultures and traditions have played a huge role in the formation of their attitude towards other countries and peoples. The respect (as well as disdain) towards other cultures cannot appear in a closed environment: the more people communicate with 'others', the more informed an opinion about them they are able to form. Not surprisingly, the most active remitters of cosmopolitan values are those who have multiple cross-border relationships with people from other countries. The majority of returnees have maintained relations with their foreign friends after coming back to Belarus: they visit each other and constantly stay in touch using modern communication technologies. As Liudmila (8: 36) noted, 'all the people I like to spend time with live abroad. Even my best friend is a foreigner'. Hers is not an isolated case and many people have very broad geographical circles of friends.

Through multiple contacts between people from different cultures, cosmopolitan values have penetrated into a part of returnees' private lives, that is, their attitudes to, and relations with, other people. They have

become more open-minded and tolerant towards diversity in both appearance and thinking. Nevertheless, in other spheres of private life, e.g., sentimental life and family projects, the influence of Western values on individual mental outlooks is not so straightforward.

### **A vision of the family among the returnees**

While the adoption of cosmopolitan attitudes in general interpersonal contexts is quite common for both men and women, the socio-cultural remittances in the areas of sentimental and family relationships are sharply gendered. The female returnees actively demonstrate Western attitudes and promote them among their relatives and friends; the men, conversely, appear to devalue gender roles and sentimental relationships promoted by Western culture. This result is particularly interesting in the Belarusian context, where spousal relations are those of partnership, with both husbands and wives having equal rights and obligations.<sup>7</sup> Historically, women and men in Belarus enjoyed equality in both public and private issues; one of the returnees is very confident about the matter:

*The behaviour model is somehow patriarchal but it is not so wildly patriarchal as in some other countries. In Belarus, there is an androgenic understanding of family, as is also the case in Russia. In Ukraine it is different. In other countries, they struggled actively for women's rights. In Belarus, woman's position in the family management has never been undermined. That is why feminism has never had any backing here and made no sense. Women have worked here since 1917. They would have preferred not to work! All these things [feminism, emancipation] are imposed and do not fit our contexts. So I like Belarusian women because they are both feminine and on an equal footing with you. They do not have these stupid liberal-feminist ideas. Mostly they are not even consumerist. There are many consumerists but not among the people I know (Valeriy, 19: 47).*

Notwithstanding the general gender equality in Belarusian families and the absence of dramatic changes in family roles described in literature (e.g., Levitt 1998; Vianello 2013; Nowicka 2015), the Western values concerning relationships with the opposite sex have entered the agenda of highly skilled female returnees. Some women told me that after their return to Belarus they feel freer from society obligations and expectations about sentimental relationships. Moreover, in some cases, the attitude towards marriage has been reappraised.

*I've changed my attitude towards relationships. In Poland, a man and a woman may be just friends. A man can treat you to a drink without any consequences. In Belarus, there is a feeling of duty towards the other, a fear about what he said. For example, I heard this from many people. 'You've been together for a year and he does not marry you? Leave him and find yourself another one!' It is very strange for me (Polina, 20: 63).*

The marriage has a great social value in the Belarusian society.<sup>8</sup> A girl is supposed to be married in her early twenties just after completing her degree (which is yet another social expectation). Getting married in a woman's thirties or later is socially discouraged: the woman is stigmatised as a bluestocking and all she does may be interpreted as the 'hunt for a husband'. Experts note that in recent years the population of Belarus has acquired features of the so-called 'European' reproductive behaviour. The average age when people first marry has increased considerably – from 22.8 years for women and 25 years for men in 2000 to 25 years for women and 27.1 years for men in 2013. Although the mean age of women at first birth is increasing too (from 24.9 years in 2010 to 25.7 years in 2014), these indicators are still much lower than in other European countries.<sup>9</sup>

According to demographers of the Resource Centre of the United Nations Population Fund (2015), Belarusians are becoming more inclined to value self-realisation and career development. Moreover, Belarusian women actively participate in both economic and political life of the country. For instance, as Belstat data show, in 2014 women accounted for almost 50 per cent of the economically active national labour force. The proportion of women among the heads of organisations was about 47 per cent while the proportion of women in the national government was about 29 per cent (Save the Children 2015). In that sense, the attitudes of the female returnees towards having children perfectly fit the actual Belarusian context. This is how Liudmila, who has spent many years abroad, has presented her formula in this regard:

*By today's standards, 28 years it is too early to have children. I think that you have to have children after 30 and before 40. Because the life with children is completely different, you cannot return your time, and you cannot leave your children anywhere (Liudmila, 8: 40).*

Similarly, the experience abroad has affected the reasoning about motherhood and parents' roles in children's upbringing. Albeit the equality of spouses within marriage in Belarus is protected by both the Constitution and the Code on Marriage and Family, the popular understanding is that the mother is the primary person in raising children and mothers more frequently get the custody of children. In contrast to these established ideas, Polina told me how her perception of family roles has changed; she began to question the existing status quo in discussions with her friends:

*In Poland, fathers have a different attitude to their children. And for me it's become a norm. In Belarus, my friends sometimes tell me 'My husband is so wonderful! This evening he's gone out with the baby!' It is shocking for me! It is his child! Why is he wonderful? It is a normal thing! (Polina, 20: 64).*

What is more, some female returnees expressed their disapproval towards Belarusian men and their attitude towards women. During our conversations, Belarusian men were depicted as lacking in initiative and sluggish. Ksenia, married to a foreigner, said: 'After returning, I can see it better. The men in Belarus are passive. I would like to see masculinity in men, they do not have it' (26: 58). In fact, the women's attitudes towards choosing a partner have been modified: an ideal spouse is not a Belarusian man, but an active and resolute foreigner.

*After returning I felt as if I was flawed. I mean, I am not flawed, I live in harmony with myself. But abroad men always said compliments to me. Here they do not. (...) I think that to marry a worthy person I have to go abroad. I do not see anybody here (Valeria, 1: 92, 1: 98).*

As I have mentioned above, socio-cultural remittances in terms of the vision of sentimental relationships are strongly gendered. In fact, male marital intentions differ a lot from the female ones. For instance, many male returnees returned to Belarus because of and considering their sentimental relationships: some had great difficulties setting up their private life abroad, others were pulled by sentimental relationships beginning to develop at home. It was very common to hear men complain about foreign women's emancipation and masculinity. In fact, many acknowledged that their return had been a largely rational decision to find a partner with mentality similar to their own in Belarus. As Nikita puts it: 'I was more inclined towards a Slavic soul' (10: 23). Mikhail has similar thoughts: 'I am 75 per cent sure that I will build my next relationship with a Belarusian or a Russian girl' (22: 55). As some explained, communication with the opposite sex in Belarus is smoother and to some extent easier because of many places where people can meet each other.

*It is easier to start a conversation, to make contact. It does not matter whether it would be something serious. They see you as a man first. And there is the eye contact. In Canada, everybody stays online. Here it is still possible to meet a girl in a bar. I think it is a good thing. Cause why do we need bars and restaurants if we cannot get to know anybody there? (Arseniy, 41: 38).*

In fact, the majority of male returnees seemed to be enchanted by local women and spoke about them in superlative terms. More often, they paid more attention to such external features as beauty and personal grooming, but also tenderness and femininity were highlighted. Roman is very happy about his private life: 'The private life is going very well here. There are many beautiful and clever girls for every taste. (...) I have not chosen yet. I am not in a hurry. Why should I? Here there are many beautiful girls and few normal men; there it is the opposite' (14: 46). Another informant describes his impressions in terms of a big choice too: 'In Minsk the number of beautiful girls and their style is five times greater than there. You can enter any bar and you will be impressed. (...) It is much easier to fall in love in Minsk because the choice is much bigger here' (Artem, 37: 26, 37: 31).

Although the euphoria over Belarusian women is prevalent, it is not uniform. Some male returnees have noted that many Belarusian girls have a consumerist vision of life: they would like to 'sell' themselves at a high price and desperately rush men in the pursuit of marriage. Many of them associate these new female attitudes with the influence of the West and strongly disapprove of them.

*The private life is going bad. My old age is coming. I would like to start a family. But there is nobody to do this with. I do not see any serious women. By serious I mean those who are disposed to accept definite roles in a family. I see many families where the attention is replaced by money. I think this is not right. (...) I would like a woman to live for family, for children, for home. (...) My friend invites me to meet some girls but they have other interests. They want to meet rich men. Lights of a big city beckon (Vladislav, 33: 53, 33: 54).*

You can see how Vladislav stresses the importance of traditional family roles, in which a woman is 'a keeper of the hearth'. This shows there is a kind of clash of female and male values about sentimental and family relationships. Whereas the women remit the newly adopted Western values and attitudes towards family-making and female roles based on independence and equality, the men transmit reactive socio-cultural remittances that valorise traditional views on gender roles, and strongly disapprove of and devalue the Western ideas of feminism and emancipation.

### **Socio-cultural remittances in the area of public life**

Socio-cultural remittances transmitted by the highly skilled returnees do not refer solely to the private sphere. While living abroad, the informants have learnt about new ideas concerning public institutions and adopted new behaviours with regard to them. In what follows, I discuss the transmission of Western values into two sectors of public sphere, that is, education and politics, and show how these socio-cultural remittances are heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory.

#### *Education*

The Belarusian system of education includes primary, basic, and secondary schools, professional technical education, and tertiary education. Within the Belarusian education system there are two official languages used

within the system – Belarusian and Russian. Secondary schooling (primary and basic levels included) lasts for 11 years, while most university courses run for four to five years. Thus, a person with tertiary degree is ready to enter the labour market at the age of 22 to 23 years (many students start working in the third year of their studies).

Although no studies are available evaluating the overall quality of education in Belarus, it is possible to rely on several unsystematic indicators. One of these is the standard of literacy, which amounts to 99.8 per cent among adult population. About 98 per cent of population have at least basic education, while almost 25 per cent of people aged 25–64 years have at least one tertiary degree. Every year, more than 80 per cent of secondary schools' graduates enter university. In 2009 the Belarusian Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) began to create and implement the Systems of Quality Assurance Management (SQAM). Belarusian HEI participate in the EU cooperation programmes such as Tempus and Erasmus Mundus. In 2015, Belarus entered the European Higher Education Area and became part of the Bologna Process. Moreover, in 2015 two Belarusian universities entered the QS University Rankings: EECA 2015, a dedicated ranking of the top universities in Emerging Europe and Central Asia.<sup>10</sup> Although many positive changes have occurred in the Belarusian education system in recent years, it still suffers from multiple drawbacks. For instance, some media<sup>11</sup> have reported that the quality of secondary and tertiary education is constantly decreasing. Belarus is one of the few European countries that do not use international assessment systems, such as TIMSS and PISA, to assess students' progress. Moreover, vocational and tertiary education sometimes struggle to meet the needs of the labour market.

That is, the public opinion about education in Belarus is twofold. Whereas some people think that the Belarusian system of education has inherited the best features of the Soviet system and is of very high quality, others criticise its inconsistencies and conservativeness. The majority of the highly skilled returnees are closer to the second viewpoint and some of them have very clear ideas about how the Belarusian education system has to be changed. Constantin, for instance, is convinced that the old system will soon die as it is only centred on rational thinking and does not take into consideration the emotional sphere. For this reason, home schooling is gaining popularity in his family and among his friends, since it takes into account the emotional side of children's development. On the contrary, Matvey thinks that the Belarusian education system does not place enough emphasis on entrepreneurship and business thinking.

*After having studied in Poland, they have the European standards and all that stuff, I understood that we need to change the system of education in Belarus. I think that it has to be changed even in the primary school. Recently I was walking with my friend and I said to him 'You know, we have studied abroad, I have two degrees. We were good students. Why do we have so little money? If we were taught the basics of business, the basics of accounting in primary school, we should be rich already!' And he replied 'Well, but you know a lot of rhymes!' You see, there is an emphasis on humanities and culture, which is not so useful in the real life. It is just a bonus, which does not help in real life, where you have to earn money. In Europe, in my opinion, they understand it (Matvey, 4: 9).*

In many aspects, the Belarusian system of education is quite cumbersome and clumsy. Although many macro changes have recently been introduced, educational programmes and courses are obsolete and sometimes do not correspond to modern requirements. The system is very rigid, bureaucratic and has hardly been reformed to date. In fact, the main claim among the highly skilled returnees was that the education system has to become more flexible in order to be capable to respond to the market demands.

*Abroad there are many different scholarships. People study something for a few years, then leave it and start to study something new. In the end, you have only one degree but a bulk of knowledge in many fields of study. People become multi-skilled. It makes workforce more flexible. Sooner or later we will have to do it (Nickolay, 12: 51).*

The most highly skilled returnees have had the experience of studying abroad, which allowed them to learn more efficient modern education technologies and adopt new approaches to education in general. What is more, the educational socio-cultural remittances are not reduced to just communicating the new attitudes to the people around. Rather, many returnees actively transmit the new values through concrete actions aimed at their children, with foreign language education being the most prominent form of such remittances. For instance, Liudmila sent her older son to an English-speaking kindergarten, because ‘in this way, he will get used to the foreign language and it will not be a problem for him when he grows up’ (8: 6). All Miroslava’s children go to an English-speaking school, too. Another informant speaking six foreign languages prefers to teach his daughter himself and considers the knowledge of foreign languages as one of the most important skills:

*I teach English to my daughter. Because the teaching standards at school are poor. It’s the same with Chinese. We chose that school because they teach Chinese. I went to Chinese classes together with my daughter to be able to help her (Yury, 9: 33).*

However, foreign languages are not the end of the story. Many returnees obtained their degrees in foreign universities; they consider this experience to be very valuable and useful. Consequently, a large part of them does not question the necessity to provide their children with a foreign tertiary degree. Even more, they consider it to be their parental duty and in most cases they have already taken this decision for their children (a choice that cannot be challenged). Grigoriy, for example, ‘[does] not see any point in studying here if it is possible to study abroad’ (42: 44). Similarly, Liudmila ‘would like [her] children to have a very good international education. Then they will choose for themselves where to live’ (8: 44). Hence, there is a strong tendency to internationalise education among the highly skilled returnees. Along with generic attitudes, they remit and implement specific strategies based on the Western values and norms they have adopted in host countries. The situation is completely different in the case of political views.

### *Politics*

According to its Constitution, Belarus is a presidential republic with a bicameral parliament. Nevertheless, according to various political scientists, the country is ruled by the increasingly authoritarian leadership of its president, Alexander Lukashenko (e.g., Eke and Kuzio 2000; Korosteleva, Lawson and Marsh 2003; Silitski 2005; Marples 2005, 2009). Lukashenko assumed the post on 20 July 1994 and was re-elected four times in 2001, 2006, 2010, and 2015. In 2005, Belarus was labelled as ‘Europe’s last dictatorship’ by the former USA Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice; since then it has become a *cliché* perpetuated by international media and politicians.

The Belarusian political opposition is represented by a small number of political parties, civic movements, and initiatives, which have no representation in the National Assembly and appear to be weak, fragmented, and scarcely involved in the political process (Charnysh 2015; Freedom House 2015). As Ash (2015) argues, ‘rather than contesting elections out of office-seeking incentives, opposition parties stage campaigns because foreign funding is directed to successful groups within the opposition’. Also according to various media, many opposition organisations get funding and other types of support (e.g., cultural events, headquarters of media

organisations) from foreign countries, mainly Lithuania and Poland.<sup>12</sup> For many years, Belarus has depended on Russia in both political and economic terms (and was consequently unwelcomed by Europe). Nevertheless, Lukashenko's criticism of Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula in 2014, the hosting of diplomatic negotiations during the conflict in Ukraine, as well as the release of political prisoners (opposition leaders) in August 2015 taken together appear to be an attempt to stabilise Belarus' relations with the European Union. Indeed, the EU foreign ministers agreed to suspend targeted sanctions on Belarus (171 people and 10 entities) for 4 months from 31 October 2015. However, various international organisations promoting democratisation and freedoms criticise Belarus for the absence of democracy, lack of political and individual freedoms and disregard for human rights. For instance, according to the report of OSCE/ODIHR (2015) on the Presidential elections in 2015, 'Belarus still has a considerable way to go in meeting its OSCE commitments for democratic elections'. Moreover, Belarus' scores in a number of rankings of political rights and freedoms is far from optimistic: it ranked 157 out of 180 countries in the 2015 World Press Freedom Index; 119 out of 175 countries in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2014; while Freedom House has evaluated political rights and civil liberties in Belarus at 6.5 (1 being the most free and 7 the least free).

Politics is arguably a sensitive topic: while some informants referred to it as to an undesirable topic, the majority of my informants did not touch the subject at all. For this reason, I am aware that the results discussed below are biased to a certain extent. Nevertheless, the opinions of four returnees about politics provided me with interesting insights on socio-cultural remittances in this public sphere (further, by referring to 'the returnees' I mean the four people who expressed their opinion about politics in an explicit way). In fact, their central point concerned the concept of democracy – one of the central values of Western culture. For instance, the returnees changed their opinions about the meaning of democracy and its applicability to the Belarusian context. One of the returnees, for instance, realised that the Belarusian political oppositionists do not have a clear idea about what democracy actually is. She stressed that the idea of democracy, on which the opposition relies, is distorted and needs to be improved and implemented through real and practical steps.

*I think that my civil position has become more active. Before I went to Poland, I participated in demonstrations in squares and shouted something about democracy but I did not know what it is. I think that a big part of our oppositionists do not know what it is, either. (...) They do not understand what they are saying, they are just dreaming. On the contrary, I know how it works. (...) They have opened town hall meetings; all the documents are online. These are small but very important things (Anastasia, 29: 41).*

In a similar vein, others spoke about their disappointment with the Western democracy, which did not appear to be what they had expected. They referred to the fact that in Belarus Western countries are depicted as the countries of freedom, but in practice the personal freedoms there are as limited as in Belarus.

*I was disappointed with the Western [political] models and all that democracy stuff. Especially in the USA I consider it zilch. It lets me take our situation easy, because the difference is not so big. Moreover, when I saw young people in Belarus or in Ukraine shout about democracy... It is not so simple and straightforward (Fedor, 13: 64).*

What is more, as is the case with sentimental and family relationships, the socio-cultural remittances are not always transmitted in a linear way following the scheme 'learn new values – adopt new values – transmit new values'. Rather, the returnees learnt Western ideas while living among the people who generally shared these viewpoints, but the next steps were somehow reversed: they not only did not blindly internalise the new ideas,



but also did a great analytical and interpretative work resulting in the devaluation of perceived ideas and practices, and in transmission of reactive socio-cultural remittances.

*I cannot tolerate all these people [oppositionists]. I think that the formed system is what we need. It was a long journey to this understanding, 10 years, but it is impossible otherwise. I do not want to say that this is the best solution; I do not want to say that I do not sympathise with the wives of political prisoners; and I do not want to say that I do not worry about the wasted potential of a huge number of young people. Nevertheless, I understand that it is much the lesser evil for a Slavic country. Again, there are some rules of the game here. Do not go into politics, pay taxes, you will be young and rich. (...) Now if we go to the polls, and there will be Alexander Grigoryevich [Lukashenko] and a Democratic candidate, I would vote for Alexander Grigoryevich. I used to spit on people like me. Now I can afford to speak in this way myself; I've come to this by myself. I did not read it in the newspapers or in books. It is my own experience (Pavel, 3: 34).*

Clearly, the returnees question the value of democracy promoted by Western cultures and in some cases even negate it. It is not the value of democracy *per se* that they question – the returnees did not doubt the importance of democracy. Rather, these people are aware of, and feel disappointed with, the inconsistency between the expected and the perceived democratic status quo in Western societies. In response to this cognitive dissonance, they began to transmit reactive socio-cultural remittances that devalue the originally learnt ideas and behaviours. This is not the issue of positivity or negativity of social remittances discussed in sociological migration literature (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). In the latter case, the process of remittances is still linear, but it is awarded a moral judgement by individuals (either positive or negative). In the case of reactive socio-cultural remittances, the new value (or idea, or practice, or whatever) is not transmitted at all; what is transmitted is its devaluation or even the opposite value.

As I have mentioned before, the phenomenon of transformation of returnees' political views into reactive socio-cultural remittances is not widespread: four returnees provided me with accounts showing these attitudes. The majority of participants in this research did not share their political views and attitudes, thus the prevailing opinion is not clear. This may be a sign of the lack of civic freedoms, which induces people to keep silent on their political preferences. Hence, further research on the topic is required to both explore socio-cultural remittances in the political sphere and to test the incidence of their reactivity.

## **Conclusions**

In this article, I focused on some normative structures and systems of practice transmitted by the highly skilled Belarusian returnees in both private and public life. I showed that although the adoption of Western socio-cultural norms and ideas sometimes leads to their transmission, e.g., in several interpersonal relationships and in the sphere of education, in other contexts it appears to be a highly heterogeneous process. The socio-cultural remittances in the area of family and sentimental relationships appear to be strongly gendered and represent two opposite currents: women adopt the Western point of view, while men reinforce their traditionalist attitudes and values. In the political realm, few returnees criticised or questioned the Western understanding of democracy – their opinions and attitudes had undergone a reactive transformation. Certainly, the formation and transmission of reactive socio-cultural remittances is neither a common nor a uniform process; its mechanisms and circumstances of occurrence are far from being clear and require further exploration.

## Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the editor, two anonymous reviewers, and prof. G. Sciortino for their valuable comments on an earlier version of the manuscript.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> According to the *European Values Study*, solidarity, tolerance, and appreciation of democracy are typical European values, which are appreciated to a much lesser extent in the former Soviet countries.

<sup>2</sup> However, according to Cassarino (2004) the propensity of migrants to become actors of change and development at home depends on their preparation for return, which requires time, mobilisation of tangible and intangible resources, and willingness on the part of the migrant.

<sup>3</sup> For example, previously studied social remittances include those between the United States and the Dominican Republic (Levitt 1998, 2001; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011); Europe and North America and West African countries (Tiemoko 2003, 2004); Thailand and the Netherlands (Suksomboon 2008); Israel and Sub-Saharan African countries (Sabar 2008, 2013); the USA and Spain and Ecuador (Mata-Codesal 2013); Ukraine and European countries (Vianello 2013; Kubal 2014).

<sup>4</sup> This article draws on the author's PhD research.

<sup>5</sup> The host countries include Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Spain, Tajikistan, Ukraine, the USA.

<sup>6</sup> Each quotation is attributed to an informant in a following way – (Pseudonym, interview number: quotation number in the interview).

<sup>7</sup> OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) is reported as 'very low'. The SIGI quantifies discriminatory social institutions, spanning major socio-economic areas that affect women's lives: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and assets, and restricted civil liberties.

<sup>8</sup> The public opinion on marriage as a socially desirable value is very strong in Belarus (similarly to Russia and Ukraine). One of the most popular Russian TV-shows is called *Let's Marry*. It promotes marriage as the most important goal in a woman's life. In the popular culture, the wedding is considered the most important day for any girl, so it happens that people take loans to organise a lavish wedding party. Also, a recent addition to the wide range of *how to do* seminars has been a *How To Be a Happy Woman* seminar. Some of the participants said that, during the seminar, marriage was claimed to be the main requisite for happiness.

<sup>9</sup> According to the United Nations Economic Commission, the mean age at first marriage in 2012 was much higher in many European countries. For instance, Germany (30.7 years for women, 33.5 years for men), Italy (30.8 and 33.8), Denmark (32.2 and 34.8). The mean age at first birth in Europe in 2013 was higher too: e.g. EU28 – 28.7 years, United Kingdom – 28.3, Germany – 29.3, and Italy – 30.6.

<sup>10</sup> Belarusian State University is on the 36th place in the ranking, while Belarusian National Technical University is on the 72nd place.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., *The Quality of Belarusian Schooling is Falling* (<http://afn.by/news/i/140343>); *Centralised Testing Is Improved Every Year, but the Level of Education Falls* (<http://news.tut.by/society/233096.html>); *Overloaded Children, Teachers' Salaries, the Lack of Hours: What is the Weak Point of the Modern School?* (<http://news.tut.by/society/349837.html>).

<sup>12</sup> *Vilnius: The New Mecca for Belarusian Shoppers and Activists* (<http://belarusdigest.com/story/vilnius-new-mecca-belarusian-shoppers-and-activists-13258>); *Poland Sponsored Belarusian Opposition – Report* (<https://www.rt.com/politics/poland-belarus-opposition-sponsorship-310>); *Poland Supports Belarus Opposition* ([http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/06/world/europe/06iht-poland06.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/06/world/europe/06iht-poland06.html?_r=0)); *‘Here We Breathe Freedom’: Basowiszczka Festival Amplifies Belarus Opposition* (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/20/belarus-opposition-music-festival-poland-basowiszczka>).

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# Social Remittances from the Professional Diaspora: The Issue of Home-Country Receptivity

Laima Nevinskaitė\*

*This article deals with the issue of home-country receptivity towards social remittances from the professional diaspora. Social remittances from the highly skilled depend on a favourable context for knowledge and skills transfer in their home countries, a context that could be summarised by the term ‘country receptivity’. This article is based on the case of Lithuania. The data comes from a series of semi-structured interviews with members of the skilled diaspora and representatives of institutions that are involved in programmes targeted at the diaspora. The analysis reveals several groups of obstacles to successful knowledge and skills transfer that may be understood as issues of country receptivity: mistrust of government by diaspora members, expressed as a belief that it is not interested in results and thus involvement of the diaspora, but rather in pursuing particular political objectives; lack of openness towards other experiences (unwillingness of institutions at different levels and in various fields to open up to new opinions, approaches and experiences brought by Lithuanians from abroad); bureaucratic and institutional impediments (inability of institutions to adapt their procedures in the interests of co-operation; slowness and ineffectiveness when dealing with requests or reacting to initiatives from the diaspora); and a perceived negative opinion (unwelcoming attitude) in society towards Lithuanians from abroad. The interviews also provide some tentative evidence of a ‘feedback loop’, through which the involvement of the diaspora causes changes in the home-country institutions. In the discussion part of the article, possible causes and implications of these obstacles are considered.*

*Keywords: professional diaspora; diaspora option; social remittances; knowledge transfer; home-country receptivity*

## Introduction

In 2012, Milda Dargužaitė became the director of Invest in Lithuania, the Lithuanian investment promotion agency. Dargužaitė spent seventeen years in the USA, where she made a career in banking, and came back to Lithuania in 2011 at the invitation of the then Prime Minister, conservative leader Andrius Kubilius. In 2014, she resigned from this position and published an open address entitled ‘Work or Tilting at Windmills?’, which indicated her disagreements with the government (by then, a Social Democratic government headed by Andrius Butkevičius) and various bureaucratic impediments to the work of her institution (Delfi 2014). In her

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media interview, she also spoke of what she saw as lack of appreciation and said that although this case is not an indication for other Lithuanians from abroad not to come back to work in Lithuania, it would be advisable first to come for a short time in order ‘to learn how everything works here’ (*Žinių radijas* 2014).

Although there are admittedly two sides to the argument (critics of Dargužaitė blamed her for ‘capriciousness’ and other character traits, see e.g. Jačauskas 2014), the story can be, and is, as we will see later, regarded as a sign of the problematic relationship between Lithuania and its professional diaspora. On the one hand, the goal of involving the diaspora is declared and programmes for its involvement exist; on the other hand, the process of collaboration is not always smooth and leaves neither side happy.

A skilled diaspora can have various benefits for the development of the homeland: it can help to increase the flow of trade and investment into the country; it can promote the country’s foreign policy goals; it can promote cultural relations between countries, and so on. Social remittances are one aspect of the diaspora’s contribution, and in the case of the skilled diaspora they come in the form of knowledge and skills transfer. However, as the above story shows, social remittances from the highly skilled depend on a favourable context for knowledge and skills transfer in their home countries, which can be summarised by the term ‘country receptivity’, explained in more detail in the next section. This article deals with the issue of homeland receptivity, analysed through the obstacles encountered by nationals abroad when dealing with the home-country institutions.

The article continues previous research on diaspora options based on the mobilisation of diaspora resources and their associated programmes in the country of origin (Meyer, Brown 1999). While diaspora networks and their potential and actual benefits for the home country have been widely analysed, relatively less attention has been devoted to the conditions in the home country that influence how effectively these potential benefits are exploited. Thus the article aims to direct research interest towards country receptivity with a focus on the ‘soft’ obstacles to knowledge transfer which arise when formal opportunities and policies for knowledge transfer are there, but diaspora members nevertheless face obstacles related to human factors.

The author of the concept of social remittances, Peggy Levitt, wrote that ‘to study how social remittances travel and to evaluate their impact, researchers have to look in one place at one point in time’ (Levitt, Lamba-Nieves 2010: 3). This article looks at the case of Lithuania, where the large diaspora (relative to the general population size) includes a significant proportion of highly skilled people, and where there is a formal government programme and various initiatives for diaspora involvement. The study, based on exploratory qualitative research methods, provides examples of the lack of country receptivity in a particular context and aims to identify obstacles/issues not mentioned elsewhere. The data come mainly from a series of semi-structured interviews with members of the skilled diaspora and representatives of state institutions that are involved in programmes targeted at the diaspora. The article concentrates on the skilled or professional diaspora, that is, highly skilled professionals able to contribute to the development of their home country in terms of knowledge and skills transfer through involvement in various activities and networks.

The article reviews previous research literature on home-country receptivity before presenting the Lithuanian context of emigration and diaspora involvement and moving on to analyse qualitative data on obstacles to the diaspora’s collaboration with Lithuania. The discussion section identifies possible reasons for and implications of these obstacles.

### **Receptivity of the home country**

For the last few decades, the emphasis of emigration policy in many countries has shifted from the losses due to emigration towards possible gains from it. This is the so-called ‘diaspora option’ (as opposed to the ‘return option’), which is based on the idea that the expatriate skilled population may be considered a potential asset

for a country and can be utilised without depending on the return of that part of the population to live in the country of origin (Meyer and Brown 1999). Diaspora is understood here in the modern sense, as the migrant community of all those living outside their home country, including those who have left only temporarily, and who identify and remain engaged with their country of origin (Newland 2010b: 3).

The potential benefits from the diaspora are manifold. They include not only such tangible benefits as financial remittances, investments in business, export flows and contributions to charity, but also social remittances in the form of ideas, values, behaviours or practices, identities, social capital and other non-tangible resources that contribute to the development of the home country (Levitt 1998; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2010).

In the case of the professional diaspora, knowledge and skills transfer as a type of social remittance come under Levitt's definition of ideas and behaviours and are analysed in various other studies (e.g. Hanifi 2006; Mata-Codesal 2013; Siar 2014). This includes, but is not limited to, the transfer of knowledge and skills in science and technology, business and trade, economics, culture and the arts. Activities by which knowledge transfer is carried out may be informal or formal, and may include training, informal advisory activities, research projects, expert consulting, setting up business ventures or investing in the home country (Siar 2014).

In addition to individual social remittances, there are also collective social remittances that 'circulate and are harnessed in collective organisational settings' (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2010: 2) and change the ways organisations function in terms of ideas about organisational management, capacity building, etc. (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2010). These are also relevant in the case of the professional diaspora. For example, Kuznetsov (2008), although he does not use the concept of social remittances or collective remittances, hypothesises a 'virtuous cycle', whereby a professional diaspora's members, engaging in knowledge-transfer activities with institutions in their home countries, contribute to the transformation of 'bad' institutions situated there (Kuznetsov 2008).

While research literature provides a great deal of evidence on the benefits of knowledge and skills transfer from the diaspora, the internal dynamics of diaspora networks that form the basis for its contributions, and diaspora policies around the world (for wider reviews, see Ionescu 2006; Kuznetsov 2006; Meyer and Wattiaux 2006; Wescott and Brinkerhoff 2006; Faist 2008; Newland 2010a; Newland and Tanaka 2010; Kuznetsov 2013; Elo 2014; etc.), within this enthusiastic 'mantra' (Kapur 2004) less attention has been devoted to the difficulties that arise in the process of the diaspora's involvement, particularly at the micro level, with person-to-person interaction. As has been noted, for the diaspora to be involved in activities with the home country requires not only the ability to mobilise and the motivation to contribute, but also certain conditions connected to the home country (Wescott 2006). Often these conditions are conceptualised as 'opportunity structures', or 'policies and initiatives for diaspora's involvement that exist in the home country, possibilities for developing skills and knowledge, and availability of intermediary organisations' (Wescott 2006: 6).

Brinkerhoff (2006: 19) claims that favourable conditions for transferring diaspora knowledge include government policies and society in the country of origin: 1) government policies that enable diaspora economic opportunities; reward and publicise diaspora knowledge contributions; facilitate information exchange; and legitimate knowledge transfer/exchange projects; 2) a homeland society that welcomes diaspora contributions, perceiving them as legitimate and valuable; does not criticise diaspora members for not returning; and confers prestige on participating diaspora members. As she mentions, these two groups of factors are mutually supportive: the homeland government policy can promote favourable attitudes in society, while society can influence government policies.

Nkongolo-Bakenda and Chrysostome (2013), in their analysis of the factors conducive to diaspora involvement in the economy of the developing homeland, define similar factors and summarise them under the label of 'receptivity of the home country's government'. Referring to previous studies, they list several factors that



constitute the receptivity of a government: ‘general attitude of government leaders toward diaspora members, diaspora investment programmes, government agencies for diaspora issues, simplifying and reducing administrative formalities related to starting a business, tackling usual hassles, such as red tape, customs delays and bribery, country image, effectiveness of judicial system, and infrastructures’ (Nkongolo-Bakenda and Chrysostome 2013: 52–53). In a survey on the Egyptian diaspora’s contribution, the main obstacle that was identified was bureaucracy in state institutions and lack of transparency (Mehrez and Hamdy 2010: 256). Brzozowski, Cucculelli and Surdej (2014) include, among other socio-economic characteristics of the home country that influence collaborative relationships, the level of corruption. In the Armenian case, obstacles to diaspora involvement include not only opportunity structures (the lack of clear priorities and wide-ranging programmes), but also the atmosphere of disregard and mistrust between diaspora and homeland expressed in the form of patronising and pretentious attitudes, prejudices and misunderstandings, and the absence of the rule of law, which creates mistrust (Manaseryan 2004: 9–10). Kuznetsov (2008) also claims that the success of diaspora initiatives depends on the quality of the home-country institutions that sustain them. He says that this factor may be even more critical than some other apparently important factors: ‘willingness of domestic economies to reform, to open up their economies is even more important than the size of the diasporas. (...) Diasporas could be massive, rich, and entrepreneurial and have a lot of enthusiasm to get involved, yet it is home country organisations which invariably become binding constraints’ (Kuznetsov 2008: 276).

Obstacles to knowledge and skills transfer have similarly been analysed in the context of return migration. Many studies have focused on the return migration of Central and Eastern Europeans, for example, Slovak doctors (Williams and Baláž 2008), and Polish (Klagge and Klein-Hitpaß 2007, 2010), Serbian (Jackson 2012) and Georgian (among other) (Kuschminder, Sturge and Ragab 2014) highly skilled returnees. These studies demonstrate that, like diaspora contributions, knowledge transfer from returnees is possible and that high-skilled return migration can support knowledge-based development, but it depends on the institutional context. The studies identify some of the obstacles already mentioned, such as extensive bureaucracy (Klagge and Klein-Hitpaß 2007; Kuschminder *et al.* 2014) and corruption (Kuschminder *et al.* 2014). At a more specific workplace level, studies on returnees mention obstacles to knowledge and skills transfer such as the lack of recognition of returnees’ knowledge, lack of trust between returnees and colleagues (Jackson 2012), lack of organisational openness to external knowledge (Williams and Baláž 2008; Oddou, Szkudlarek, Osland, Deller, Blakeney and Furuya 2013) and colleagues’ lack of experience and capabilities (Kuschminder *et al.* 2014). Several of these studies confirm the positive relationship of knowledge transfer with colleagues’ previous international experience (Jackson 2012; Oddou *et al.* 2013) and link the obstacles to knowledge transfer to the relatively young age of returnees, which is regarded with suspicion in relation to proposed changes (Williams and Baláž 2008; Jackson 2012).

Thus the supportive context for knowledge transfer comprises more than ‘opportunity structures’ understood strictly in the sense of available policies and initiatives; it also includes other factors such as quality of institutions and bureaucracy, relationships of trust, attitudes towards and acts of appreciation of the diaspora on the part of government, and welcoming attitudes towards diaspora contributions in wider society. In this article, the wider concept of ‘home-country receptivity’ will be used as it corresponds more accurately with the subject of the present study. Although not well conceptualised in literature, it can be defined as the willingness and the ability of a country to accept and assimilate knowledge and skills contributions from its diaspora. For the purposes of the empirical study presented here it is defined more precisely as the absence of ‘soft’ obstacles to knowledge and skills transfer from the diaspora, that is, the absence of obstacles that arise despite the existence of formal programmes and material resources for diaspora involvement. In the interviews, diaspora involvement in knowledge and skills transfer was discussed in terms of ‘collaboration’ with institutions in the home country, so the term ‘collaboration’ will also be used in the analysis.

### The context: diaspora policy in Lithuania

Lithuania faces one of the highest emigration rates in the EU. While the exact numbers are not available due to the large scale of unregistered emigration (cf. Thaut 2009), it is estimated that during the period since independence (1990–2014), as many as 825 000 people have left the country. With immigration estimated at 198 000 (mostly returning Lithuanian citizens), Lithuania has experienced net migration of 627 000 people since 1990 (European Migration Network 2015), or 17 per cent of the 3.69 million inhabitants it had in 1989. A significant proportion of these emigrants were skilled, educated, younger people (Thaut 2009; Sipavičienė and Stankūnienė 2011).

In the first decade after independence, the emphasis of emigration policy was on relationships with Lithuanians from earlier waves of emigration, as well as support for the teaching of Lithuanian and Lithuanian cultural activities for ethnic Lithuanians in other, mostly neighbouring, countries (Bagdonavičienė 2012). With the rising numbers of ‘new’ emigrants, fuelled by EU membership in 2004 (cf. Thaut 2009; Sipavičienė and Stankūnienė 2011), public attention and policy discourse shifted to economic emigration and the encouragement of return migration to the country. However, the economic crisis of 2008 again caused the focus of emigration policy to shift, with renewed emphasis on the need to maintain the Lithuanian identity of Lithuanians living abroad and involve them into the life of the country, without necessarily bringing them back; in other words, maintaining the diaspora’s links with the country and using its potential for the country’s development (Bagdonavičienė 2012). The change of language (from the *Strategy for Regulation of Economic Migration* in 2007 to the *Global Lithuania Programme* in 2011) was symptomatic of the shift. Thus the development of emigration discourse was a concentrated reflection of the development of policy approaches to emigration observed in many other countries (cf. Faist 2008).

Recent years have seen the start of some major initiatives in the task of involving the diaspora. In 2011, under the previous government (2008–2012), the *Global Lithuania Programme* was established, setting out guidelines for involving the diaspora in the life of the country. The programme has no dedicated budget and is financed by individual ministries or projects financed from EU structural funds. Both in connection with the programme and as separate initiatives, several important programmes and projects were started, which have already proved successful. Two very important examples focused on the skilled diaspora are the Invest in Lithuania and Enterprise Lithuania projects. Since 2012, Invest in Lithuania (an investment promotion agency) has implemented a programme called *Create for Lithuania* (at the end of 2015, the funding of the programme for 2016–2019 was confirmed but reduced by half). The programme enables young Lithuanian professionals from abroad to come to Lithuanian state institutions to work on a project basis to solve particular inter-ministerial problems, such as improving conditions for companies to employ specialists from third countries, or the development of a deposit-return system for disposable beverage containers. Since 2013, Enterprise Lithuania (an agency that, among other tasks, works to help Lithuanian companies to penetrate foreign markets) implements the Business Advisors programme, where Lithuanians from abroad act as advisers for Lithuanian companies, particularly those entering foreign markets. There are other programmes addressing the diaspora more widely.

The programmes described are the responsibility of organisations affiliated to state institutions. Non-governmental organisations and diaspora networks also run numerous projects and activities: for example, the Global Lithuanian Leaders network, run by a non-governmental organisation, connects over 700 highly successful and experienced Lithuanian professionals from all over the world and is highly visible in diaspora discourse and related activities. Global Lithuanian Leaders is the initiator (together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Invest in Lithuania and a private company, TEO LT) of the Global Lithuania Awards which are

presented annually to international Lithuanians and ‘friends of Lithuania’ who contribute to the global development and promotion of the country. All these activities demonstrate the strong motivation of diaspora members to engage in the development of Lithuania and of the government to use this potential, and the existence of at least some opportunity structures for diaspora engagement.

## Methods and data

This article deals with home-country receptivity, understood as defined above, and focuses on the obstacles that Lithuanians living abroad face when they engage in various knowledge-transfer activities, that is, in collaboration with people and institutions in Lithuania. It is a subjective look at the receptivity of the home country: rather than analysing diaspora policy it focuses on how the receptivity is perceived by members of the diaspora themselves. The analysis is therefore based on a constructivist approach: it is assumed that the obstacles they perceive are real, since these will reduce their motivation to participate in activities with Lithuania. On the other hand, most of the respondents who were interviewed have experience of participating in various projects with Lithuanian institutions or have professional relationships with Lithuania. Therefore the obstacles they mention might be overgeneralised, but are nevertheless based on real experience.

The study discusses obstacles that members of the diaspora face in collaboration with several types of institution, both state and academic. When the receptivity of the home country is discussed in the literature, the role of state institutions is emphasised; Kuznetsov (2008) writes about institutions or organisations without explicitly defining what kind of institutions or organisations are relevant. However, in the present study, respondents often indicated obstacles that they face when dealing with academic institutions, and business organisations were also mentioned. Thus it is assumed that organisations from all fields are relevant and they are all included in the analysis.

The study uses an exploratory approach based on qualitative data. The main body of data was 30 semi-structured interviews with members of the skilled diaspora (Lithuanians abroad working in business or academia, both representatives of diaspora organisations or networks and individual professionals – see Table 1 for their characteristics) and eight representatives of institutions involved in the *Global Lithuania Programme*. Most interviews were conducted in 2014 within the framework of a research project dedicated to the study of Lithuanian diaspora networks; most interviewees were visited by researchers in their countries of residence (UK, Ireland, USA), while a few were interviewed on visits to Lithuania or on Skype. Three representatives of diaspora organisations who were interviewed (themselves return migrants) are currently living in Lithuania. Some of the interviews were conducted in 2012 for another study (Gudelis, Gečienė and Jakulevičienė 2012) and are used here with the permission of the authors.

A supplementary data source used in the study includes comments collected in an anonymous survey of diaspora members conducted within the same project. In the survey, 512 Lithuanian professionals living abroad were asked to evaluate the importance of factors that discourage them from being more involved with Lithuania. In addition to evaluating the listed options, they could specify other factors in their own words. In these comments, many respondents mentioned specific obstacles that can be classified as home-country receptivity issues and thus are relevant for the present study. Only 24 respondents provided additional comments in the text field of the question, and these are used here as an additional source of data.

**Table 1. Characteristics of respondents**

Characteristic	Number
Sex	
Female	15
Male	15
Age	
21–30	7
31–40	8
41–50	8
51–60	3
61–70	1
71–80	3
Interviewed as	
Individual professional	16
Representative of a diaspora organisation	14
Professional field	
Science, research	11
Business	10
Arts	4
Other	5
Country	
USA	10
UK	7
Lithuania	3
Other	10

In the semi-structured interviews, the members of the diaspora were asked about obstacles and difficulties they face in their professional relations with Lithuania. The interviews with representatives of institutions employed a similar approach, addressing different aspects of inclusion of the diaspora in the life of the country, including questions about obstacles to collaboration. Among the state institutions that form part of the *Global Lithuania Programme*, the most useful and interesting interviews were those with agencies under the Ministry of the Economy (Enterprise Lithuania, Invest in Lithuania) that have specific programmes for diaspora inclusion and also encounter obstacles while dealing with other state institutions. Other interviews with state institutions were used to assess their attitudes towards collaboration with Lithuanians from abroad and awareness of possible obstacles. In the text, quotations from interviews are italicised.

#### Obstacles to collaboration with the home country

Analysis of the interviews yielded several groups of obstacles to successful knowledge and skills transfer that may be explained as issues of home-country receptivity: diaspora members' general mistrust of government; the lack of openness towards different approaches and experiences; bureaucratic rigidity and inefficiency; and a perceived negative attitude to emigration in society. These are discussed in further detail.

*'The government itself is the problem': the issue of trust*

The interviews show that general mistrust of the Lithuanian government hinders participation in government programmes for the diaspora; in the words of one interviewee, the obstacle to participation *is, in principle, mistrust of the members of the Lithuanian government*. One respondent, when asked if the government could be the initiator of programmes to involve the diaspora, replied that *the government itself is the problem*, because mistrust of it and other problems of public governance drives people out of Lithuania: *I would wish for less corruption and for Lithuania to become a more Western-like country with more trust in government* (21–30, UK, employed in business, coordinator of a collaboration programme). Although some respondents were positive about the government's efforts to involve the diaspora, the predominant attitude in the interviews was critical, even from those who acknowledged some progress in this respect.

If we define trust in institutions as the belief that they act in the public interest, the professionals interviewed do not believe that Lithuanian institutions do. One of the obstacles to the use of diaspora potential identified in the interviews is the inability of the government to distance itself from political interests, with the result that decisions, e.g. on public appointments or allocation of resources, are made not on the merits of the qualifications of the specialists or in pursuit of national goals, but are based on particular political interests. Respondents were positive about the efforts of the previous government to attract investment to Lithuania *via* diaspora connections (the successful cases of Barclays and Western Union were mentioned). The respondents considered that those efforts were successful because, in respect of certain appointments, priority was given to people's qualifications and expertise rather than to their political affiliations or connections: *The best the government can do... is to delegate the work to the experts in that field who perhaps hold different political opinions but are interested in doing the job in the best possible way* (21–30, UK, business consultant).

In this context, the case of Milda Dargužaitė, described at the beginning of the article, was mentioned as a negative example. Some of the respondents acknowledged the possibility of different interpretations (*it's a different story, how she was acting herself*) but nevertheless treated the case essentially negatively as the quintessence of the inability of state institutions to involve the diaspora and appreciate its contribution: *How can you convince diaspora to come back, if you act like this?* (31–40, UK, representative of a diaspora organisation). In the words of the respondent, it demonstrates a breach of the principle of meritocracy that harms relationships with the diaspora.

The lack of this principle is also exemplified by the inability of state institutions to respond to diaspora requests (e.g., about possible support for activities of diaspora organisations or a search for contacts for particular activities) unless they come through personal connections or from a person with formal status, as noted by one of the respondents:

*The main problem with the institutions is the Lithuanian mentality. In Lithuania, there is a tendency towards elitism. If I am some kind of a boss, then there is contact with me, if I am of lower status, then basically I don't get any attention. (...) When they say they build relationships with emigrants, they mean they have contacts with the leader of the Lithuanian World Community, and that's good, but do they communicate directly with people? (...) Official requests are met very coldly and you have to look for personal connections in order to pursue your interests* (41–50, Ireland, representative of a diaspora organisation).

*'They come here and teach us how to live': lack of openness to other experiences*

In the interviews one can see a clear pattern: the obstacles that are mentioned most often are those connected with mentality, thinking and culture, and not with financial or other material resources; in other words, 'soft'

obstacles. One frequently mentioned issue is the closed nature of Lithuanian institutions (both state and academic), meaning their unwillingness or inability to show interest in and to accept different experiences and opinions (in the words of one respondent, *to learn from someone else's mistakes*). The following passage, where the respondent talks about the need to change thinking and open up to the world, could be used as an illustration:

*First of all, the thinking must change. (...) We have to stop thinking that Lithuanian experience is the best in the world. Lithuanian experience is equally as good as Irish, or English, but it is not the only possible one. We have to stop thinking, for example, that a student who has studied in the same university from undergraduate to doctorate is the ideal student. Usually, it's good to change several times. In Lithuania, this is not easily accepted. When you say that the student was there and there, then they say: oh, it's clear, he was running around and he is not serious. But he has more experience, which is valuable. This is difficult. (...) The first change we must make – to get out of our heads that everything Lithuanian is the best (41–50, Ireland, representative of a diaspora organisation).*

Thus, in the opinion of those abroad, Lithuanians in Lithuania are not interested in their experience. Obstacles to cooperation mentioned in the survey by respondents included: *lack of openness, provincialism, unwillingness to include others, unfriendliness*, etc. In the opinion of one respondent, this attitude – *they come here and teach us how to live* – is discouraging international Lithuanians of various generations whom he knows. The respondent thinks that recently this attitude has become less prevalent, but is far from extinct. Thus *you have to be more open and not think that we come to take something away from you*. This is contrasted with the example of Estonian academia, *where many more Estonians from abroad are employed or have come back, because the Estonian academic world is much more open to the Western academic world* (41–50, Canada, researcher).

Another respondent, an expert in social sciences working abroad, said he did not have the feeling that his expertise or connections would be used. A wider problem, he explained, is that state institutions are not interested in consultations with outside experts (the respondent had previously said that he wanted to register as a consultant during the 2013 Lithuanian presidency of the Council of the EU, but could not figure out how to do that):

*What I saw while working here in the agency is that other countries are much more able to use the EU, that is, those contacts that they get because of the EU. (...) I see as an obstacle the fact that consultation mechanisms in Lithuania are not developed. All consultations that the Lithuanian government has are often simulated. They take place only because it's done like this elsewhere and because EU financing requires consultations with interest groups. But it is often just an imitation of consultations (41–50, Ireland, researcher).*

In the respondent's opinion, experts of various nationalities could be employed as outside consultants, but Lithuanians from abroad would have an advantage, because they could read documents in Lithuanian and in many cases would be better acquainted with the Lithuanian context.

A respondent from Invest Lithuania recounted the difficulties that the agency encountered during the implementation of one of their projects – *Create for Lithuania* – in which young professionals from abroad take up short-term projects to solve a specific problem. The agency met with strong opposition on the part of the state institutions that had to employ the programme's participants. With their clear functional boundaries, the institutions were unaccustomed to the project-based and inter-institutional nature of the work:

*I remember the first time I was presenting this programme to the ministries and explaining how everything was going to work, and they said: 'What?! Projects?! What projects?! A project is something that is financed by EU and lasts five years. We are not project institutions, we are functional organisations, and my job is to supervise new drafts of certain laws, or fill in certain documents'. And we, with Create for Lithuania, we came with, let's call it a business approach, that there is a problem and it doesn't matter that it is related to the spheres of both the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Security and Labour and some other ministry. You have to solve that problem in a complex way. Because if you just scrape away at one institution, nothing changes. This was extremely hard to accomplish (21–30, representative of Invest Lithuania).*

The respondent affirmed that later the situation started changing and many state institutions acknowledged, at least at senior leadership level, the advantages of the programme and the value created by the young professionals – although not in all cases, since there are still some institutions that are not able to propose projects suitable for the programme in the sense of being sufficiently specific and ambitious. However, as the respondent said, there are problems at the lower level, with young professionals facing negative attitudes from other (older) officials and obstacles in their daily work.

Some scepticism towards the experience of Lithuanians from abroad is felt even among businesses, although probably less so than in other areas. According to the Enterprise Lithuania representative, for some companies the Lithuanian consultant from abroad initially seemed like a *waste of time*, but eventually most of the companies involved in the programme appreciated the benefits of this kind of collaboration. In the present study, no other obstacles to collaboration with companies were mentioned (the sample did not include any other respondents working in businesses). However, as we saw in the literature review, this does not rule out the possibility that businesses are not entirely open to contributions from the diaspora. Žvalionytė's (2015) research has shown that Lithuanians who have come back to live in Lithuania don't feel that their experience is being appreciated and are even aware of negative attitudes towards them; for employers, too, the experience of living and working abroad does not always constitute an advantage. Although the results of this study cannot be automatically applied to cases of collaborating without returning to live in the country, they do indicate that the business sector is also capable of displaying something of a closed attitude towards the contributions of the diaspora.

Reflecting on the possible reasons for these kinds of attitude, some respondents mentioned envy, competition, negative attitudes in the culture towards young people (since the professionals from abroad tend to be young), and even fear of losing their job. Research literature shows very similar explanations from other countries (cf. Williams and Baláz 2008; Jackson 2012). This is echoed by an observation by one of the respondents that the relationship between diaspora and country of origin should be an equal one, making it the most productive for collaboration:

*The relationship must be equal, then you can collaborate and learn something. Most people don't get that. If you are not my chief, why would I listen to your orders? But perhaps it's not a command I'm giving you, it's advice. Lithuanians listen to advice only when it comes from their chiefs. I stereotype here a little... (41–50, Ireland, representative of a diaspora organisation).*

On the other hand, in some cases the opportunities offered by Lithuanians from abroad might fail to be appreciated because of their newness, lack of familiarity and the absence of particular traditions; thus they only become accepted gradually over time and against the background of a continuing publicity campaign. For example, the coordinator of a project aimed at Lithuanian students, *LT Big Brother*, which provides students

with a Lithuanian mentor from abroad for support on personal development, career planning and employment issues, stated that one of the obstacles to implementing the project was insufficient motivation on the part of the students. It was not easy to attract students and to keep them motivated, since they did not entirely understand what a mentor was and what one could expect from them. However, positive development has been achieved by simply educating the students about the project idea and continually promoting it.

*'Any request disappears like in a black hole': bureaucratic rigidity and inefficiency*

Institutional rigidity and inefficiency was a problem frequently mentioned in the interviews and exemplified by many stories. By rigidity, we mean the inability of institutions to adjust their procedures when required in the interests of more effective collaboration with Lithuanians from abroad, or for any collaboration to happen at all. Inefficiency in this case refers to their inability to cope with tasks in an acceptable manner and at an acceptable speed.

Bureaucratic systems in institutions cannot foresee all possible circumstances, and neither can they make exceptions in specific situations or cases in the process of dealing with the diaspora. Lithuanians from abroad may need exceptions to be made because of differences in the legal, academic or other systems in different countries and their more complicated life stories. Respondents mentioned examples from collaboration with academic institutions. University teachers experience difficulties with the strict structure of lecture cycles (*There is no model, which would allow for one or two lectures from an outside lecturer; 21–30, UK, scientist*), with the lack of flexible forms of employment (*In America they can be a visiting professor, agent... there is nothing like this in Lithuania. If I want to be a part of the faculty, I have to be full time with a permanent salary and then of course I have to be at the university for a certain time; 41–50, USA, scientist*), and even differences in forms of lecturing and requirements for students (*When I teach at Vilnius University, for example, a part of my requirements is that students come to every lecture. I am told that I cannot require that. I say that I can, because my teaching is based on discussions; 41–50, USA, scientist*).

The same scientist told a story not directly connected to any collaborative activities, but nevertheless symptomatic. He said that in the end he did not vote in parliamentary elections, because he could not fill in the forms he got from the Lithuanian embassy. After the first attempt to submit the documents, he was told there were too many mistakes, and decided not to continue with the forms:

*Although I intended to register this time, I didn't finish it, because there are problems with those forms, in the sense that they are not suitable for Lithuanian citizens who were born in America. They ask 'how many years ago did you arrive in America?' I don't know how to answer this question, if I was born there. My life doesn't fit into their forms (41–50, USA, scientist).*

Another problem experienced when dealing with state institutions is inefficiency, with replies to requests taking too long or not being received at all: *I often hear a complaint that we have contacted [an institution] and we haven't received the answer (41–50, representative of the Foreign Ministry).*

At project level, inefficiency is experienced as differing views on aspects of work culture: project management, meeting deadlines, etc. For example, several respondents from academia complained about their negative experience of collaborating with scientists and researchers from Lithuania. At the start, the Lithuanians show a great deal of enthusiasm for joint projects, but then the partners are faced with delays and uncompleted tasks, unacceptable for academics from other countries or even impossible to reconcile with their other responsibilities:



*So the first steps are very enthusiastic, but when we come to the stage when we have to talk about the important stuff and implementation of things, it gets a bit stuck. (...) When we have already passed that first step where there is an interest in the project and we are setting our goals, when we come to the implementation of those goals, everything shatters: they either don't reply quickly to emails or they say 'oh, this didn't work out, perhaps we can postpone it until next week'. But in America it doesn't work like that: if you have a deal, you have to work for it. And many things are organised at least a semester beforehand and not one or two weeks. So there is a lack of such understanding (21–30, USA, researcher).*

Another respondent addressed this problem when talking about the role of state institutions in promoting diaspora projects. In her opinion, state institutions should not take part in the management of these projects, and she explained this in terms of *differing views on how it should be done* (21–30, UK, employed in business, coordinator of a collaboration programme). As she explained, when one has experience of working abroad in big corporations, one acquires a *different* understanding of project management and the skills required, and therefore an attempt at joint management of a project could even result in a conflict. In the comments in the survey, some respondents also indicated *lack of competences* as an obstacle to collaboration with Lithuanian institutions.

Respondents also mentioned other specific problems with institutions that add to their rigidity and inefficiency, such as dispersion of functions and lack of coordination between different institutions:

*When I talk with representatives of ministries, I see a huge scattering and pursuit of individual interests. (...) How can you say to me, who has come from London, that we are not able to agree on this with other institutions, because their regulations say differently? I say, if it is an obstacle for collaboration, your priority has to be to change this (21–30, UK, representative of a diaspora organisation).*

The interviews demonstrated that although at higher policy levels declarations are made about involving Lithuanians from abroad, ordinary officials may lose sight of this somewhere at the lower levels. On the *Create for Lithuania* programme, for example, although ideas were welcomed at the higher levels of state institutions, participants nevertheless encountered numerous difficulties. Other respondents also told of cases where state officials or embassies initially displayed a willingness to help, but later failed to fulfil their promises because of lack of time or other reasons. For some respondents the state institutions' approach was simply uncaring:

*Perhaps something [the willingness to involve diaspora] is affirmed, but I don't think that anything much is done. For example, a simple case, here we needed some posters of Lithuania for one of the presentations about Lithuania. And we tried to enquire everywhere possible, in order to get some posters. It appeared, we were told, that there are no posters. So, somehow, the attitude was rather uncaring. (...) Such things sometimes drive one away and make one think pessimistically (41–50, Luxembourg, official at an EU institution).*

Respondents noticed a formal attitude towards communication with the diaspora even from those responsible for it, such as employees of embassies of the Republic of Lithuania; they observed that it depended very much on the particular individuals working there at the time: *Now the embassy has become somewhat formal (...) I think now they are not really interested (41–50, Austria, performer); There was one ambassador, who herself wanted to keep in contact; (...) the present ambassador shows passive initiative, only as much as is written (41–50, Ireland, representative of a diaspora organisation).*

Importantly, all the interviewees had been disappointed by this kind of experience with state institutions, and a single negative experience is likely to dissuade them from further involvement:

*There is a very small likelihood that diaspora will invest in Lithuania, because they don't get enough information. The Lithuanian government is so bureaucratic that any request disappears like in a black hole. People who have had such experience stop thinking seriously about the possibility of investing in Lithuania (31–40, Lithuania, representative of a diaspora organisation).*

In the words of academics, lack of efficiency on the Lithuanian side also diminishes the motivation to take on new projects in the future: *You cannot carry the team as a backpack the whole time (21–30, UK, scientist)*. Thus, although qualitative interviews do not allow for generalised conclusions, the assumption is that even individual negative experiences present a problem, since people are prone to make generalisations about all institutions, which then affects their motivation to collaborate. Besides, they expect that the goal of involving the diaspora will be a priority that would result in exceptions where appropriate.

*'Lithuanians, not emigrants': attitudes in society towards emigration*

In addition to the specific obstacles in communicating with the diaspora, Lithuanians from abroad also mentioned, as a receptivity issue, how accepted and wanted they feel in Lithuania. As was discussed in the theoretical part of the article, society's attitudes towards the part of the nation living abroad are important because they provide a background to diaspora policy and can influence the way institutions function.

The opinion of respondents in this respect is also quite negative: they think that society in Lithuania is not positively disposed towards Lithuanians living abroad. They think that there are *quite often accusations that, you know, they left to have a richer life or something like this (41–50, Luxembourg, official at an EU institution)*. It is important to note that even politicians are thought to hold this type of attitude: *Some politicians shouldn't... shouldn't declare such a negative attitude, because it really does not encourage people to come back and [do] something (41–50, Luxembourg, official at an EU institution)*. The problem was also noted by the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

*We often see, particularly when we deal with Lithuanian politicians, the attitude that if they left, let them be on their own, why do they need government support? Well, there is such a negative attitude in Lithuania. But it is changing. I've seen even during the last few years that it is changing (41–50, Lithuania, representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).*

Another respondent noticed that the terms used to refer to Lithuanians living abroad also reflect attitudes in society. In her opinion, they should not be called *emigrantai* (emigrants), since it has negative connotations, but instead an integrative term *užsienyje gyvenantys lietuviai* (Lithuanians living abroad) should be used: *When journalists ask the question: 'you there, emigrants'... My first reaction is 'What emigrants? Girl, do you know what the word emigrants means? Say, Lithuanians living abroad'. You have to integrate them, they are Lithuanians, not some emigrants; the very connotation of emigrant is negative (31–40, USA, manager)*.

### **Explanations and implications: a discussion**

The qualitative nature of our research and its subjective approach do not allow for definite generalisations and causal analysis. Possible explanations for the problems identified by the diaspora members interviewed, and their implications, are therefore presented here as a discussion.

Obstacles to collaboration between Lithuanians living abroad and Lithuanian institutions diminish the receptivity of Lithuania towards its diaspora. This perceived lack of receptivity can reduce the diaspora's willingness to collaborate, as shown in our interviews. However, some of those from abroad collaborate despite the obstacles, because their strong intrinsic motivation makes the obstacles seem smaller or possible to overcome: *If you want to participate, none of the [issues] listed is an obstacle* (comment in the survey). Motivation to cooperate is strong, which is also clear from the interviews: several respondents, discussing obstacles to collaboration, mentioned that perhaps they were not determined enough, not firm enough to push for what they wanted. One respondent observes negatively the fact that the motivation of international Lithuanians to collaborate might be higher than that of the state institutions, whose function must be to communicate with Lithuanians living abroad and seek to involve them in joint activities:

*But it is very difficult to start this bureaucratic machine moving. Now it has completed a cycle and perhaps it will start moving in that direction. Until now there has been very little effort. Therefore we have to observe the situation ourselves and get involved, since the push from Lithuanians from abroad is now definitely stronger* (21–30, UK, representative of a diaspora organisation).

The interviews with the representatives of ministries that are part of the *Global Lithuania Programme* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Science and Education, Ministry of Culture, and embassies in other countries) show that they understand the goals of involving the diaspora and declare their openness towards it, and also that they are aware of some of the problems facing Lithuanians living abroad in their pursuit of professional relationships with Lithuania. For example, the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasised efforts to create trust between Lithuanians living abroad and institutions in Lithuania, as well as Lithuanian society. However, the obstacles at lower organisational levels that are repeatedly indicated in the interviews implies that although the will to involve the diaspora may have been affirmed at the political level, it has not necessarily penetrated into the bureaucratic structures of state and academic institutions where the dominant attitudes and work culture may be opposed to the new influences introduced by the diaspora, or may simply not be capable of exploiting its potential effectively. In other words, the goal of involving the diaspora that is declared at the higher policy levels gets lost in the lower levels of bureaucracy, where collaboration with the diaspora ceases to be a priority or is not so strong a priority as to overcome the usual bureaucratic routines and obstacles.

A possible explanation may be related to the dominant attitudes towards the diaspora in society. A reference to Balcerowicz's (1995) ideas may be relevant here: he claims that understanding of institutional change cannot be dissociated from human dispositions in a whole society. Thus human dispositions (values, ways of thinking) might explain how and why institutions work in a particular way. In this sense, the problems of the diaspora when dealing with Lithuanian institutions are merely a reflection of the prevailing relationship between Lithuanians and their co-citizens living abroad. And this relationship is still somewhat problematic, as other surveys and studies reveal. Almost 40 per cent of Lithuanians abroad perceive a negative attitude from Lithuanians in Lithuania towards emigrants (Vilmorus 2014). In contrast, attitudes towards economic migrants are rather positive (80 per cent of respondents in a representative survey hold positive attitudes towards those who have left the country for economic reasons), although the phenomenon of emigration is viewed negatively (70 per

cent evaluate emigration as a negative phenomenon) (Budginaitė 2012). In other words, its possible benefits to the development of the country are not recognised. In addition, the experience of those who come back to live and work in Lithuania is not appreciated. A large proportion of return migrants claimed that their experience abroad was not an advantage when looking for a job, and 8 out of 10 employers claimed they would prefer an employee without emigration experience over one with such experience (Žvalionytė 2015). Also, the media tend to depict emigration in a predominantly negative light: on an individual level, emigration is mostly framed as an opportunity, while on the societal level it is more often framed as a negative phenomenon, with the possible benefits to society underrepresented (Nevinskaitė 2015). These findings mirror the opinion of respondents in the present study about experience acquired abroad being disregarded.

Another possible explanation is time related: the *Global Lithuania Programme* was launched fairly recently (in 2011) and it is possible that there has not been enough time for higher-level policy tasks to be translated into corresponding attitudes and practices at all levels of the institutions. If we want state institutions and other organisations to be genuinely responsive to the initiatives of the skilled diaspora, the idea of diaspora involvement has to be spread more widely and discussed sufficiently for it to become an unquestionable priority.

On the micro level (on the level of interaction), unwillingness to accept different approaches may be explained by theories that analyse knowledge transfer in more general (non-diaspora) contexts. For example, acculturation theory interprets knowledge transfer as a culture contact, with diaspora members acquiring ideas, attitudes or practices from another culture and experiencing cultural difficulties on return to the home country or, in this case, when dealing with people from the original culture (cf. Bochner 2006). Barriers to knowledge transfer can be explained by theories of knowledge management. On the knowledge recipient's side, the most important of these is the 'not-invented-here syndrome' – a negative attitude to knowledge that comes from outside one's own organisation (Kathoefer and Leker 2012). Power issues may also be at play in the processes of knowledge transfer (Williams and Baláž 2008).

On the other hand, as noted in the literature (Kuznetsov 2008), diaspora involvement might help to transform the very same institutions at home, since the diaspora brings new approaches and new work cultures – this is precisely the nature of social remittances. As the representative of Invest in Lithuania said in the interview, the goals of the *Create for Lithuania* programme go beyond making something good for Lithuania and include the task of inducing changes in state institutions: *The main goal is anyway, as I would say, to change the public sector. That is, to demonstrate different principles of work* (21–30, representative of Invest in Lithuania). As she said in the interview, the institutions are starting to acknowledge the benefits and accommodate to the new approaches introduced by the project's participants, so diaspora involvement may indeed start the 'virtuous cycle' of institutional change (Kuznetsov 2008).

Implications for policy development confirm some of the ideas expressed elsewhere in literature. Further publicity on diaspora contributions and discussions in society are needed in order to change popular attitudes towards emigration. As regards policy, while the quality of the home institutions is not satisfactory, efforts to involve the diaspora should focus on highly motivated champions, whose intrinsic motivation helps them to overcome obstacles and achieve results (Kuznetsov 2006). It is also recommended that the public sector should not be directly involved in diaspora programmes; its role should rather be to facilitate diversity of initiatives from the bottom up (as Kuznetsov (2012: 13) suggests, 'let one thousand flowers bloom') and to provide a framework for sharing information and exchanging good practices.

## Conclusion

Exploiting diaspora potential depends, among other factors, on the receptivity of the country, which means an ability and willingness to accept its contribution. In the long term, this factor may be more important than the size of the diaspora or individual initiatives by diaspora members.

The analysis presented in the article reveals a number of obstacles that diaspora professionals face when engaging in knowledge transfer with institutions in Lithuania (both state and academic), which could be regarded as embodying a lack of this receptivity. These obstacles include mistrust of the government in general, the lack of openness of Lithuanian institutions and society towards different experiences, the rigidity and inefficiency of institutions, and perceived negative attitudes in society towards emigration. As the interviews imply, all these factors decrease the motivation of diaspora professionals to collaborate with institutions in Lithuania.

The findings confirm the home-country receptivity factors identified by other researchers: an efficient bureaucracy, welcoming attitudes towards diaspora contributions, the importance of trust between the diaspora and the home country's government and positive attitudes towards emigration in organisations and society as a whole. The present study, moreover, shows these factors at work: how the lack of these positive factors is perceived as an obstacle by the diaspora members themselves; and how this translates into negative motivation to collaborate. The present study also confirms, although tentatively as yet, the influence of collaborative efforts on institutional change in the home country, in other words, the existence of collective social remittances.

A somewhat surprising aspect of the findings was the notable lack of appreciation of the knowledge and experiences acquired by diaspora members in other countries (in all cases, more developed than Lithuania). In the research literature, the contributions of the diaspora are explicitly or implicitly considered to be positive, while the present study shows that the attitudes of the 'receiving' side might be different, at least as seen through the eyes of those on the 'giving' side. Perhaps this is related to the nature of social remittances, which aim to change some general habitual behaviours, such as the ways of project management or other work practices, or to the fact that the benefits of this kind of change are less tangible.

The analysis reveals that, while at the highest policy level positive attitudes towards collaboration are expressed, and programmes for collaboration exist, diaspora professionals repeatedly report obstacles to the process of collaboration. An important conclusion therefore follows: there may be a discrepancy between the policy that is declared and how it functions in reality; formally, opportunity structures for diaspora contributions may exist, but in reality they do not function entirely smoothly. Thus future research should not be limited to the analysis of diaspora policy, but should place more emphasis on studying its functioning at the micro level and on the experiences of those that are the subjects of this policy.

## Funding

Research project *Use of the Potential of Lithuanian Professional Diaspora Networks* (2013–2015) was funded by the Lithuanian Research Council, contract no. MIP-084/2013.

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# 'I Don't Want This Town to Change': Resistance, Bifocality and the Infra-Politics of Social Remittances

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*The process of social remitting is complex and multilayered, and involves numerous social actors that at each stage face several choices. By definition, the process of socially remitting ideas, codes of behaviour and practices starts with the migrants themselves and their social context in the destination country. This paper focuses on the as yet unexplored issue of resistance performed and articulated by migrants confronted with potential change influenced by social remittances and the generalised process of diffusion. Faithful to the understanding of social remittances as ultimately a process where individual agency is the crucial determinant, the article follows the ideas, practices and values travelling across the transnational social field between Britain and various localities in Poland. Resistance to change and new ways of doing things is a continuous dialogical process within one culture's power field, which is understood here in anthropological terms as a porous, open-ended field of competing meanings and discourses. Notions of bifocality, infra-politics of power relations and resistance are an important aspect of remittances and their reinterpretations, and resistance to social remittances by migrants, both in their destinations and in their communities of origin, is a crucial component of the whole process without which our understanding of remittances is incomplete.*

*Keywords: social remittances; resistance; Polish migration; agency; change*

## **Resistance to social remittances: the missing piece of the puzzle**

Interaction with novelty and new social conventions faced by migrants in their destination countries means that migrants acquire some levels of reflexivity. They observe, make choices and constantly compare. That comparative state of mind, coupled with a transnational 'way of being' (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994) and resulting in what Vertovec (2004) terms 'bi-focality', is not just at the heart of the transnational lives migrants lead, but is a precondition of any social remittances understood as the diffusion of ideas, norms and practices (Levitt 1998; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011) – in other words, stimulating social change. Boccagni and Decimo (2013: 3) also regard this as a fundamental underlying aspect of the discussion on social remittances: 'central to the study of social remittances is, to begin with, the faceted and changing relationship between migrants and their communities of origin'. Social remittances are thus one of the ways change and modernity take hold in given societies. But if, as Levitt argues, the diffusion of ideas, practices and norms

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impacts societies of origin through migrants' agency and feeds into the complex process of modernisation and development with all the social and cultural change that entails, then we can expect that not all change would be regarded as desirable by migrants and non-migrants alike, or rather that at some point these social actors would have conflicting ideas about what *ought* to be remitted and what *ought not*. As social remittances 'are distinct from, but often reinforce and are reinforced by, other forms of global cultural circulation' (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011: 3), one can expect this 'reinforcement' to be conditioned by factors such as power relations, cultural context, and both collective and individual identity-construction processes. In that sense, it is crucial to draw attention to the issue, omitted so far in research, of what happens when aspects of social life in the destination country are regarded negatively and are deemed not to deserve acceptance by wider society at home or, when endorsed by migrants, prove not easily transferable. This article considers resistance to social remittances as the other side of the coin of the whole process, reflecting migrants' evolution from carriers of non-reflective stereotypes to critical thinkers and social actors capable of agency. *What* is not remitted and *why*? What norms, values, and behaviours are deliberately chosen as something that for normative, practical or other reasons *should* not be remitted and implemented? The main aim of this paper is to explore how migrants who take part in social remittances maintain some control over this process. While there is no clear deterministic and causal relationship between migration and social remittance-influenced change, or lack of it, immigrants who are part of the transnational social field are nevertheless vital 'filters' through which new and old clash or are reconciled.

### **Concepts and methods**

Although influential insights into social remittances have recently been further refined (see Boccagni and Decimo 2013), there does not seem to be adequate reflection on why certain ideas, norms and practices are *not* being transferred, even if this seems practical, financially advantageous or normatively desirable – for various actors in question, i.e. migrants, communities they come from, returnees. Resistance to these remittances or reluctance to accept or implement them stems from a perception of the social world and the changes it is undergoing that is, overall, culturally meaningful. From the perspective of reflexive modernity, this attitude is informed not just by migrants interacting with non-migrants or people in the transnational social field; it is also informed and influenced by the myriad of multilayered perceptions and constructed meanings and definitions of social change that communities and people are experiencing globally – through media, structural changes such as the impact of European funds, more endemic social changes and global redistribution of wealth and power. Thus, in their resistance to particular aspects of social change expressed by an individual, both global influences and the impact of transnational connections are often merged. The tension, ambiguity and contradiction that ensue often appear as the uniform face of modernity in the worldview of the individuals concerned. Ambiguity, thus, is at the heart of the problem, as it directly links with cultural hybridity and the potential changes undergone by localities of origin. Migrants have traditionally been seen by relatively closed cultural units as liminal figures, being on the threshold, in between worlds, potential transgressors and individuals who may threaten the *status quo* of gendered power relations (Turner 1980, see also Weber 1995). In her brilliant analysis of the modern politics of immigration control, Bridget Anderson (2013) goes further to claim that the figure of the immigrant is in fact essential for the citizenry to – through contrast – define itself. Suffice to say that in the localities of origin immigrant status is ambiguous, as it both benefits and also threatens the given order. It is two decades since Gupta and Ferguson (1997) called upon anthropologists to focus on these transgressive figures whose lifestyles, culture and worldviews occupy so-called borderlands – in the conceptual, empirical and in discursive meanings of the word. Borderlands that contain the multiple meanings of locality, community, identity and bounded notions of town, village, city and group – far from self-evident

and constantly questioned by subjects (1997: 8–9) – are thus embodied in migrants and the new norms, practices and values they bring home.

Resistance is a popular concept among anthropologists and, as is usually the case, has also been injected with various meanings, mainly around its positioning within power relations and its relationship with identity and place. Opposing a classical political view of resistance, Foucault has influenced our understanding through his conceptualisation of resistance as agency that exists in relation to a ‘strategy of power’ that shifts and adapts along with the development of social contexts. ‘There is not’, Foucault writes, ‘on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy’ (1978: 101–102, quoted in Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 19). The mention of ‘tactics’ by Foucault is important here, bringing forward de Certeau’s (1984) understanding of social actors dealing with power and structural determinants through their continuous tactical, mundane actions in the everyday reality of social life. Although power can be invisible or absent in particular circumstances, in de Certeau’s (1984) view the weaker side of the equation will always resort to invisible and difficult-to-detect ways of resistance and contestation which do not question underlying ideological or symbolic underpinnings of power relations, but are simply designed to extend the level of individual autonomy in a given unequal power field. In a similar attempt to operationalise the notion of resistance in capturing the ‘invisible’ forms of power relations, James Scott (1990) writes about ‘small scale resistance’ and ‘infra-politics’ which draws its power to contain structural relations of domination from its undetectability (hence the notion of ‘infra’) and its ability to camouflage resistance as banal forms of cultural production – through gossip, jokes, ridicule, proverbs and ‘folk’ modes of self-expression. There is also the poignant observation made by Gupta and Ferguson (1997: 19) that we need to ‘think of resistance as an experience that constructs and reconstructs the identity of subjects’ and that in our modern hyper-mobile and hybrid globalised world, resistance is implicitly functional to the idea of ‘place making and identity’. In that logic, a mundane observation, a casual statement and critical reflexive comment gathered during interviews with migrants becomes part of a complex multi-vocal narrative of making sense of structural forces, but also accommodating, adapting and finally resisting them in relation to specific place-making practices.

Resistance to social remittances can therefore be viewed as resistance to social change generated by modernising processes in various domains. There is already a significant tradition within migration studies exploring resistance to globalisation, and there are numerous examples of that approach, usually referred to as ‘transnationalism from below’ or ‘transnational urbanism’ (Smith 1994, 2001), or in the literature on contemporary social movements. This usually relates to overt and open contestation of global hegemonic processes at play, with collective actors very much aware of the stakes and operating within a given political opportunity structure (Ireland 1994).

This paper, however, suggests a more mundane, smaller-scale resistance that does not involve collective action or organised, politically charged contestation. Building on Scott’s (1990) notion of small-scale resistance and ‘infra-politics’ of groups that are under particular pressure from institutionalised power and hegemonic discourses, it looks at resistance to social remittances as a sum of small, everyday mundane actions – in discourse, behaviour, norms and values – which are not specifically directed or organised. They stem from the natural inertia of the social world, of mundane patterns of social and cultural reproduction (Miller 2008). They may also stem from strategies of making sense of the world that contest hegemonic discourses in other ways – attention to these forms of resistance by immigrants is, for example, drawn by a study of immigrant Pentecostal churches in Germany where religious symbolism contests the legal nation state-centred dominant discourse on immigration and assimilation (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006). Similarly, in her account of the use of irony in the narratives of migrants from Kerala, Gallo (2015) notes how crucial it is for

social actors to reconcile and make sense of conflicting and ambiguous positions within an unequal power-relations field. The subtle and mundane ways people use irony to address frictions between the normative and actual dimensions of their family lives and instances of social remittances demonstrate how important it is to recognise the agency of migrants.

This approach has methodological implications, as the driver of the interpretative framework employed to discuss the data in this paper is Anthony P. Cohen's (1994) proposition of the 'anthropology of consciousness', where meaning making, and the perception of what actually happens to people and how they define and categorise the social world is the key to understanding why people do what they do. Here, meaning making refers to the ways in which people make sense of the world as it is shaped by constraining cultural meanings, reproducing them through action, performance and negotiation (Cohen 1994: 166). Similarly Michael Peter Smith (2001) points out, in his study of 'transnationalism from below', that the transnational methodological lens or 'optics' (Levitt and Lamba-Liebes 2011: 3) has to explore people's experience of crossing 'political and cultural borders' and capture 'the emergent character of transnational social practices' through people's narratives as they directly engage with the dominant structures of power, discourses and collective constraints (Smith 2001: 138). When migrants' narratives on transgression are the central point of departure, the link between resistance and place making and identity becomes apparent. Moreover, the place-making process is embedded in a transnational social field where both localities become meaningful through their relation to each other. This aspect is also not well developed in the literature on place making, often being confined to the place of destination (Castles and Davidson 2000; Gill 2010).

Migrants, through their specific status associated with transgression and liminality, and engagement with bifocal 'ways of being and belonging', offer crucial clues to the micro-levels of power structures that people have to deal with – whether related to intergenerational tensions, gender divisions, workplace arrangements, class identity or religious practices and dogma. Methodologically this paper thus links the 'big questions asked to little people' (Smith 2001) with the emerging understanding of the social remittances process as quite distinct from other forms of modernity diffusion through media, cultural production or structural forces driven by globalisation processes. Its distinction lies precisely in the focus on the individual actor and the choices they make at each step of the remitting process. The resulting importance of face-to-face or other direct contact between social actors engaged in the remitting process thus becomes apparent. As argued elsewhere (Grabowska and Garapich 2016), it is through direct interaction, experience and example that ideas, norms and practices travel and are implemented (or not), and this is what makes social remittances significant not only for scholars but in the eyes of migrants themselves. Social remittances as process are thus fundamentally different from other forms of influence since they are personal, subjective and offer social actors the opportunity to express their sense of place and identity, and reflexively position themselves on the complex transnational field.

The data for this paper are drawn from fieldwork in the UK and 50 interviews with migrants from three Polish localities studied. Fieldwork consisted of a combination of semi-structured interviews and observations, such as Friday evening football matches, conversations in informal settings (pubs, parks) and casual scenes of family life. Respondents came from three localities in Poland, and were roughly evenly divided in terms of gender and age. Data gathered focused mainly on changes the individual and the place of origin underwent and on the complex web of understanding of how migrations impact localities of origin. Respondents were selected through snowballing and references from places of origin in Poland. The narratives that were generated aimed to provide a picture combining the individual experience of migration, exposure to the 'new' world in the destination country and a reflection on the individual's own background, culture, social norms and values back in Poland. The result was a detailed model of transferring social remittances (Grabowska and Garapich 2016). At the same time, during fieldwork there was an increasing awareness that migrants critically engage

with the notion of change due to social remittances and articulate a greater or lesser degree of resistance towards the issues discussed, and that resistance emerges at various steps of the social remitting process. The sections that follow discuss three of these steps, each illustrated by an example from fieldwork. The first concerns how migrants in their place of destination resist the idea of changing individual behaviour, ideas or norms as they seem incompatible with their own world view, practice or culturally understood ‘taste’ or simply because in migrants’ perception they feel their locality of origin and its inhabitants should not change at all. Second is the case of a migrant adapting to new ways of ‘being’ and ‘thinking’ but, for various reasons, resisting the notion of transferring them to the place of origin. The third example looks at migrants or returning migrants who have attempted to transfer social remittances and implement change but with no desirable outcome. This article focuses predominantly on the process as it is enacted by migrants themselves and their experiences.

### Ways of being, ways of resisting

Stephen Vertovec (2004: 977) refers to bi-focality or double orientation as ‘clearly discernable in social practices and conveyed in individual narratives’ and having a clear impact on ‘individual and family life course and strategies, individual sense of self and collective belonging’. This is of course quite a common observation in migration studies (Guarnizo 1997; Golbert 2001). A typical example is the Sylheti migrants studied by Gardner (1993) whose perception of the duality of their lives is articulated through the notions of *desh* (home) and *bidesh* (foreign context), where the interplay and cognitive tension between them gives meaning to their individual agency. This ‘oppositional presentation’ of which migrants are making sense always take two places of reference into consideration, with the comparison producing various degrees of positive, negative or neutral results. The values migrants put on these indicate various degrees of endorsement, acceptance or resistance.

In the context of resistance to social remittances, fieldwork among various networks of Polish migrants currently residing in the UK and originating from the three locations studied, has brought to the surface two broadly distinct tendencies: 1) a negative perception of the ways host societies are ‘doing things’; and 2) a perception of stagnation, static social order and conservatism in the localities of origin. That criticism is not only aimed at constructing a worldview, but a statement on how things *should be* or *should remain* and that social change is either impossible or undesirable. A similar phenomenon was highlighted by Levitt (2009: 1237), who called it the ‘ossification’ effect, where both migrants and non-migrants are contesting change in the community of origin, mainly to preserve perceived traditional values and retain forms of cultural and social autonomy.

In the first example, respondents categorically reject some aspects of British society as against their value system or worldview. Here, a typical example – although not the only one – would be the critique of equality in relation to gender, family and sexuality that is perceived as having socially destructive effects in Britain. This respondent for example asserts:

*They totally destroyed things... This progress is rather controversial... The whole thing with issues around morality and gender here in the UK doesn't look rosy. My friend works at the NHS and that revolution [sexual] that happened some time ago... we now deal with the consequences of this. The biggest percentage of abortions, gay partnerships, that this is the main reason behind spreading STD and AIDS, this is alarming... red lamp is beeping since some time... Family is in a critical state... it looks tragic... things went too far... they say that gay partnerships is a family unit... this is mad.*

Resistance in that context focuses on the overall rejection of social liberal values; the respondent was at pains to stress how important it is for this process not to be transferred to Poland. These sweeping generalisations were not that common, and the majority of respondents showed a more nuanced view on sexuality and gender, but this case illustrates how potential change due to socially remitted new ways of thinking is being resisted at the initial stages of contact. This respondent is quite active in the blogosphere, is civically engaged and keeps in close touch with friends in Poland, ensuring an audience for his views.

While variations on this attitude were voiced in some interviews, respondents stressed that it would be impossible for the majority of people in the locality of origin to accept or replicate attitudes that are dominant in the UK. This respondent for example, noting that he himself ‘doesn’t mind gay people’ and agreeing that his familiarity with homosexuality while living in London had made him more tolerant, said that this would not be possible back in his home town: ‘no, such a person [gay] would need to hide in Sokółka, he would be beaten up’. Resistance to new ideas at this stage can thus be active, conscious and deliberate, but equally it can be more obscure and passive, and is justified by the apparent static and unchangeable nature of the place of origin. Place making and identity in that context are woven around two radically opposed ideas of progress and stability, family and its alleged disintegration due to the liberal values of the West, quite a common trait in Polish nationalist discourse (see Zubrzycki 2006). We can see, then, how change itself is being contested and at the same time how that contestation positions the identity and claim to the place of the respondent – as the social actor *able* to influence social values and norms ‘at home’ – as someone in a position of power (active in the former case, passive in the latter) to decide what is wrong and right in their locality, as someone still *there* or at least having a claim to it.

A seemingly opposite tactic through which social remitting may be blocked is when migrants construct the place they came from, their place making and identity from afar, through strong insistence on its unchangeable nature. ‘Nothing changes there’ was the mantra heard time and again during fieldwork and it is important to focus on it here. It is important to understand that the bifocality of migrants, their transnational reflexivity and double frame of reference is a constant place-making and identity-construction mechanism. In order for that reflexivity to remain functional, these points of reference – ‘here’ and ‘there’ – need to remain relatively stable, fixed and infused with some static meanings separating them from the locality of destination, in much the same way as the notions of *desh* and *bidesh* are oppositional (Gardner 1993). A fatalistic view, repeated over and over by migrants about Sokółka, for example, may be seen as a way to symbolically insulate the place of origin in a kind of time capsule. This meaning is relational, as it is always contrasted with the fast-moving and changing world of London in which migrants operate. Importantly, however, respondents who strongly criticise their home town, its people and social atmosphere were at the same time very positively predisposed towards the features of the place that London lacks – mainly (in case of Sokółka) its nature, forests and opportunity to ‘get away from the city’ or (in case of Pszczyna) a small, slower-paced place with a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere. In that sense, transnational migrants do not want the place to change at all since it will disrupt the bifocal identity they have established with stable places of reference along the binary concepts of: London as urban, fast, famous for its rat race, dynamic, chaotic space; and (for example) Sokółka as natural, friendly, peaceful, stagnant and static. So for many respondents bringing ‘something’ from London would amount to mixing worlds that should not be mixed since they are defined by their ‘oppositional presentation’ and cultural meanings forming a stable translocal (in the sense that we are talking not about ‘nations’ here, but specific localities, as shown by Anne White 2011) social field where the boundaries relate to values or practices people hold dear rather than institutions or structures. The following two dialogues show how contrasting constructions of ‘here’ and ‘there’ are made simultaneously meaningful through the notions of change or ‘non-change’:

**Interviewer:** So to what kind of place would you like to return? Is it ok as it is, or does something need to change?

**M.:** Honestly, I can't be bothered to think about it, since nothing will change, but it will always be worse [than here].

**Interviewer:** Peaceful, what do you mean? You mean here it is...?

**J.:** Fast pace of life. Too fast. I mean we live. We manage, but it is tiring sometimes. I often think of Sokółka.

**I.:** Yes? What draws you back there?

**T.:** I mean, it's like with the food. If you get a taste of something when you are young, you like it... (...) so us, we were brought up somewhere else, not here in a big city, but somewhere else, so we want to go back...

**J.:** And to spend a weekend... and finish work at 3pm... as they do over there... and you still have half a day... you can jump in [the car] and go somewhere...

**T.:** So many things you can do...

**J.:** The elderly [in Sokółka] go there now. Summer picnics, they go to the woods, have a bonfire... And what is there here?

There is a sense, not just of nostalgia in these narratives but a clear place making, a self-identifying practice of making sense of one's emotions. Crucially, T. doesn't frame this as something that bothers a Pole in Britain, but rather voices the sense of alienation and feeling uncomfortable in a big city that a rural person would experience. London in that sense is the emblem of urbanism and occupies a radically different place in this respondent's place making. In migrants' perceptions, their bifocal orientation means that the two localities occupy extreme positions and should not be fused or mixed; the way of life in one place – with all the negative and positive consequences – should not interfere with the other.

Moving along the continuum of the various forms of resistance, the next example is similar to the previous one, except that the respondent deliberately chooses not to talk about the issue in question with people in her home town. The reflection below touches upon the issue of tolerance towards people from other religious or ethnic backgrounds. The respondent, a woman married to an Englishman, stressed several times during the interview that her own views had become more tolerant and liberal but in Poland people seem to be much more conservative, so she decides not to dwell on certain topics in her conversations in order to avoid confrontation:

*For example, one of these changes is that a friend I was close to married a Muslim. And for a while they lived in [name of town]. I lost contact with her, he is Egyptian. And I don't know if they returned to Egypt or still live in [name of town]. When I talked about this to my parents, they said that they don't see them. There was a period when my friend, Catholic all her life, was thinking about converting to Islam. And she talked about this with me. For me, this is... no issue, such a normal thing for people to talk about. [But] I did not even mention anything like this to my parents. My parents would... they also would... they have a bit of a racist view. Not only racist but also very traditional when it comes to religion...*



Resistance does not have to be related to critical attitudes towards some aspects of the host society. Silence or not talking to non-migrants, family or friends during a visit is an important, often overlooked way that people choose not to remit, hence its best description is an ‘infra-political’ way in which individuals resist social remitting. This respondent voiced strong anti-clerical views about the Polish Catholic Church, mentioning paedophile scandals, patriarchal structures, etc. However, she chooses not to raise the subject with her strongly Catholic parents back in her home town. As she says, after a few arguments over the baptism of her children and First Communion, she prefers to avoid the subject altogether.

An area that was often explicitly talked about as something that should not be remitted back to places of origin is cultural attitudes towards gender and diversity. In particular, and here the attitude was relatively common, respondents voiced strong resistance to accepting public displays of sexuality other than heterosexual. ‘In private, it is all right, but they should not demonstrate that and this is not something I would like to see in Poland’ was a common response. Crucially, these statements often came while acknowledging the fact that migration and living in the UK resulted in migrants themselves becoming more tolerant on the issue. So acceptance in one context did not mean acceptance in another – the Polish one. Again, we witness here the importance of bifocality for migrants where the frames of reference co-exist but should not merge. In a similar vein we can see it in attitudes towards cultural and religious diversity, in particular towards Muslims. Respondents often acknowledge diversity as a positive feature of life in Britain, but one that should not be replicated or transmitted to Poland (again this mainly referred to the Muslim population). Although in their narratives respondents often talked about becoming more ‘tolerant’ and ‘open-minded’ towards other nationalities, ethnic or religious groups, it was often qualified by references to the undesirability of Muslims’ presence being replicated in Poland.

The last point of discussion relates to cases where change, despite willingness to implement it on the part of both migrants and returnees, was met with resistance in the locality of origin. Any change through social remittances has the potential to disrupt and challenge given cultural norms, values and resulting power relations. It is not surprising, then, that social change that migrants *may* bring with them is contested and resisted. Again, this takes many forms.

One, which relates directly to the notion of ‘hidden transcripts’ which is adopted here for the purpose of analysis, is as old as humanity: resistance through gossip and ridicule. The common reference to a migrant who comes back temporarily displaying their recently acquired wealth often includes pity, jokes and irony. Some respondents explained that two decades ago, this may have made an impact on locals, but today it is irrelevant and draws attention to the insecurity and moral collapse of those who try to show their superiority by conspicuous consumption. This timeframe reminds us again that places exposed to migration flows over generations develop specific responses to the outflow of their inhabitants and their continuing impact on the social sphere. This is part of migration culture, after all, and places like Sokółka with its borderland status and long tradition of migratory flows has had time to insulate itself against the potential impact of social remittances. That insulation, however, does not always come from within but is also due to migrants’ unwillingness for the place to change or their strong belief that this could not possibly happen.

Social change and new ways of ‘doing’ are often embedded in objects. Material things are never socially neutral and bring with them significant meanings, symbols, narratives and ideas that the owner wishes to convey to the wider world (Miller 2001). It is here that an agency that may be seen as mere imitation – bringing an object from there to here – once transplanted into a new social setting can trigger resistance as it is perceived as a form of innovative behaviour, sometimes threatening the *status quo* but most importantly, always transgressive in nature. An example of this process was provided by a respondent who began jogging in Sokółka, after taking it up in England. Imitation of behaviour observed in Britain, however, acquired new meanings and new obstacles when transplanted to local settings in Poland. The young jogger began attracting curious looks

from Sokółka's inhabitants which showed that many in this town regarded jogging as behaviour at odds with local lifestyle and in particular at odds with expected gender roles. To avoid comments and sceptical looks, the respondent took to jogging in more secluded areas.

A similar example of this process is the respondents who, after a stay in Britain, changed their perception of wellington boots. Popular in Britain, sometimes being a fashion statement and objects of considerable monetary value, wellingtons in Poland, however, especially in rural communities, are laden with class-related meanings. One would not go out in wellington boots to town, to go shopping, to church or to pay someone a visit. In Polish rural communities this type of footwear is strictly reserved for work-related activities, in particular, work that is dirty – in the field and in stables – and to wear it denotes one's status as rural working class. In caricature, to wear wellies (*kalosze* in Polish) is to be a peasant. Therefore, wearing wellies in town or to church is essentially a class and style transgression that breaks the rules of local behaviour.

The final example is about migrants who are willing to remit a feature of the host society in the face of resistance from the locality of origin. Migrants are in almost unvarying agreement that British driving culture is far superior and that in Poland drivers should learn from the British example to improve road safety and stress. According to many respondents, this is the main thing that Poles ought to bring from Britain. It refers not only to interaction between drivers, but also to overall attitudes to safety, such as wearing seatbelts, not driving while drunk, consideration for pedestrians, and so on. Driving culture and the everyday interaction between strangers it entails forms an important body of differences between Poland and Britain highlighted by our respondents. It seems that migrants value what Vertovec (2007) calls the 'norms of civility' that form the unwritten code of conviviality and interactions in highly urbanised diverse societies. At the same time these norms are transferable and migrants very often emphasise that it seems things in that domain are changing in Poland and that their (migrants') attitudes may be playing a part in that process. This is of course very difficult to determine, but the very fact that migrants are so eager to stress the difference and then argue that change in Poland is highly necessary and is slowly happening, suggests that they are implicit agents in that process, albeit met with strong resistance. This extract from an interview illustrates this process perfectly:

*M.: I'll give you an example. Here, intelligent people (...) when they get into the car, they fasten their seatbelts.... But in Poland, they won't do that. I tell them, fasten your seatbelts. And [they say] shut up, sit where you are. I tell them, listen, just, fasten them because... it is a small town where we live, everyone knows each other, no? Honestly, that example of my friend, I constantly argue with him about it. This is not about you not fastening it. Just that someone will hit you and you'll have a problem. By accident they can lock you up, no? (...) Or letting people go through the crossing. The rule that if you are a metre from the road, [the car has to stop]. In Poland too it is a rule but the culture of these people is different (...) I shout at them, listen man.*

These two respondents discussed the small shifts and changes they undergo while driving on a visit in Poland:

*J.: So, yes, I'd like to transplant the driving culture, all these 'thank yous' and 'pleases'. This is class. This is driving culture. When I am in Poland I try to [follow] but they don't believe me I think.*

*T.: Zebra crossing for pedestrians. In Poland you can show this [British driving culture] but you never know if you'll get hurt for doing it...*

Or this comment:

**Interviewer:** *So, when someone comes from London, he is getting a bit of that other driving culture?*

**Z.:** *Oh yes, definitely...*

**I.:** *So less drinking and driving...*

**Z.:** *Oh, I doubt it...*

These micro-level discussions on change, resistance, desirable improvement and the protection of the culture against forms of transgression centre around the global forces that shape power relations, gender dynamics, consumption and even personal safety (as in the case of driving culture). Crucially, they are also place-making meaning-constructing practices where ‘here’ and ‘there’ are not just spaces, but places infused with cultural meanings that give a particular space its identity – but in a transnational social space where one place is made meaningful by contrasting it with another. This in turn points to the individual’s normative understanding of what a particular place should look like and what ideas, norms and practices ought to be remitted. In the discussion over the wearing of seatbelts, we can read a nuanced tension and the ambiguity of migrants’ *versus* stayers’ claim over ‘how things ought to be’. It is the sum of these discussions’ outcomes that makes social remittances influential, but at each step they encounter a carefully calculating, decision-making individual.

### **Conclusions: transgressors and agents**

This paper calls for an actor-centred approach to social remittances. Complex and multi-vocal ways in which people construct their identity and engage in place making in the context of transnational migrations acquire an additional dimension when social change and tensions between two or more localities are taken into account. Places, as identities, are relationally constructed, in the sense that the hyper-urban nature of the global city gives meaning and a sense of particularity to places like Pszczyna, Trzebnica and Sokółka, places respondents are emotionally attached to, or where the traditional heteronormative family structure serves to condemn the negative effects of Western liberalism. The actor-centred approach is also in keeping with the endemic processes within the locality of origin, in which migration is part of the local worldview. Sokółka, with at least six or more generations of migrations, had to deal with the same issues over and over again. It is thus safe to say that the social constructions of emigrants, social changes due to migrants’ presence or non-presence and novelties are part and parcel of this town’s migration culture. What migrants have been bringing in is potentially transgressive and revolutionary, requiring a set of notions, norms, behaviours and attitudes that neutralise either the changes or the influence of those that carry them. Resisting change can happen on various levels and in various contexts but at each step, social actors are making constant careful decisions about *what, if and how* the change in question needs to happen.

In the above description of the various steps and instances when these decisions are made, the mundane, tactical and ‘infra-political’ nature of their articulation is probably the most important. Whether through ideological rejection, banal omission of a thorny subject during a conversation, chatter about driving culture or gossip about the conspicuous consumption of some returnees or about that jogger, resistance to social remittances builds an important and sometimes impenetrable wall through which it is difficult for returnees or visitors to see anything beyond mere ‘stagnation’ and ‘conservatism’. Remaining insulated from some of the influence of migrants is probably one of the most important features and resources that these small communities have to retain some level of identity, especially in the age of the increasing influence of the globalisation processes of which European integration is one part.

## Funding

Funding for the study on which this article is based was provided by the National Science Centre, Harmonia Programme, project *Cultural Diffusion Through Social Remittances Between Poland and UK* (2012–2015).

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# Return Migration and Social Change in Poland: 'Closures' to Migrants' Non-Economic Transfers

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*The aim of this article is to provide an empirical test of the model of non-economic transfers by migrants such as values, attitudes, behaviours, lifestyles, transnational social networks, know-how, skills and knowledge. The first part of the article discusses the current state of Polish society, identifies the direction of social change in Poland since 1989 and analyses the mutual dependency between social change and migration. The second section offers the analytical model and describes how existing empirical data from official statistics and research reports as well as the author's own research projects have been analysed. The crucial element of the model is the notion of 'closure', defined as any factor that makes the migrants' non-economic transfers difficult or impossible. Within each of the three categories of closure – socio-economic, cultural and psycho-social – more specific barriers to non-economic transfers are tested, e.g., lack of cohesive policy towards return migrants, social narratives on migration or 'homecomer syndrome'. The analysis leads to the conclusion that, however difficult the measurement of the impact of return migration on social change at this stage, return migrants' transfers are accelerating the process of social change in Poland towards the model of well-developed, post-modern Western societies, whereas closures impede this process.*

*Keywords: post-accession migration; social change; social remittances; return migrant; actor of change*

## Introduction

The aim of this paper is to introduce a model of migrants' non-economic transfers impacting on social change, using Poland as an example of the post-communist country. An exploratory test of the model uses existing empirical data from publicly available statistical sources and research projects in migration studies; however, more in-depth analysis is still required. By providing a framework that includes barriers to non-economic transfers, this model contributes to research on the impact of non-economic transfers on the dynamics and direction of social change in Poland. It is relatively easy for researchers to trace the economic transfers of migrants and to measure their volume and direction through bank transfers, and household, educational and business investments. Migrants' non-economic transfers – the social and cultural elements which they bring home – are extremely difficult to conceptualise, as are questions of how these resources are transferred, what barriers are in their way and what their impact is on social change in the home country. The answers to these

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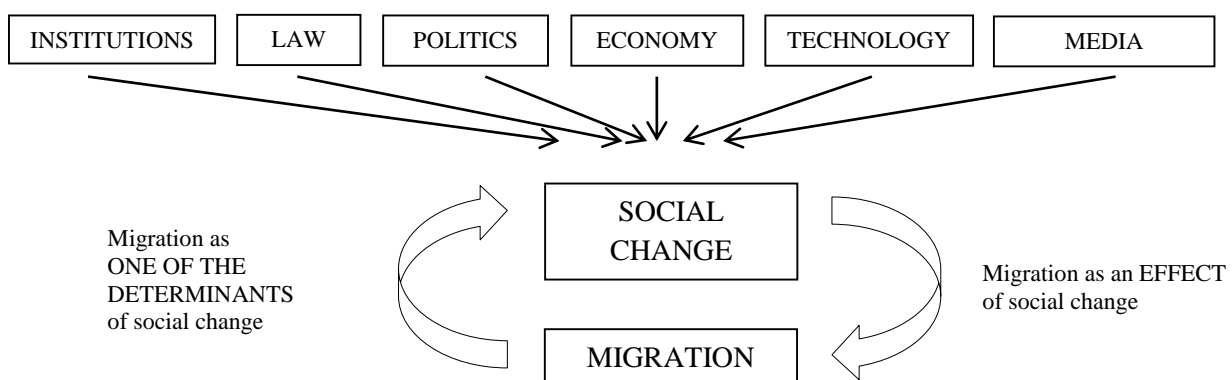
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questions are important for policy makers, politicians, social activists and researchers who want to understand the process of migration and its links with social change as well as the mechanism of ‘closures’ (barriers) in the way of their implementation. In the Polish context some of these questions have been raised in public debate around the post-accession migration after 2004, when, within just eleven years, around 2 million Polish citizens left the country for the UK, Germany, Ireland, Sweden and other Western European destinations. In the context of social change, migrants are often seen as both the medium and the instigators of ‘the new’ (Levitt 2001, Weinar 2002; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). Therefore, the society of the sending country has specific social expectations of members of its diaspora and return migrants. People quite often see returnees as possessing undefined qualities, knowledge and ideas. The in-depth analysis of the process of migrants’ non-economic transfers is also important for intra-EU policies and solutions, such as the idea of the ‘knowledge-based economy’ in Europe, which often occurs in EU legislative documents.

### Contemporary Polish society and the direction of social change

Studies that see return migration as the main determinant explaining the direction and scope of social change in Poland after 2004 at macro-structural level make a critical mistake. If the wider socio-cultural context of the post-communist period in Polish history is omitted, such studies fail to include the endogenous determinants which principally explain the phenomenon of non-economic remittances. The present study understands migration as an integral part of wider revolutionary change in Poland after 1989. The impact of post-accession migration on the home country should not be treated in isolation. It has been impeded by wider social change and is the consequence of endogenous determinants, but it plays a significant role in the dynamics and direction of the change. This means that migration is an effect of social change in the form of accession to the EU, but owing to migrants’ non-economic transfers it also has an impact on the dynamics and direction of social change. Therefore the relationship between social change and migration is reciprocal. In a sense migration is both the effect and one of the determinants of social change (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Migration as the effect and one of the determinants of social change**



The process of social change is multifaceted and cannot be instigated by an individual alone or by a group of individuals. However, the place of the individual actor in the process may be incredibly important, accelerating or impeding the whole process. An interesting example of the role of individuals as actors of social change comes from a study of the return migration of the second generation of Poles from the UK in the late 1990s. These respondents were undoubtedly actively involved in Polish matters and willing to take part in Polish economic transformation. Their unique competences in terms of language skills and knowledge of cultural

patterns made them perfect candidates to be sent by British companies such as advertising agencies to set up new branches. For most return migrants, being effective actors of change was an act of patriotism but also represented a career opportunity (Górny and Osipovič 2006: 63).

The post-communist trajectory of the country involved changes in the economic, cultural and social aspects of people's daily lives. Scholars usually describe this process as a shift from one type of state to the other type of state, illustrated by binary oppositions (see Table 1). The present study focuses on two (modernisation and post-modernisation) of four possible theories illustrated by the comparative statistical data.

**Table 1. Conceptualisations of the process of social/cultural/economic change in Poland since 1989**

Conceptualisations	Binary oppositions	
Occidentalisation (Mokrzycki 1999)	Eastern cultural forms and values	Western cultural forms and values
Modernisation (Okólski 2012)	Pre-modern	Modern
Post-modernisation (Inglehart 2007; Boksański 2007)	Modern	Post-modern
Cultural trauma (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser, and Sztompka 2004)	Equilibrium	Cultural trauma

Modernisation theory – however controversial – emphasises the shift from a pre-modern to a modern society. This direction is seen as positive mainly in economic terms. Poland, for many decades cut off from market-oriented Western countries, is seen as technically and socially undeveloped. Therefore the social changes of the last 26 years are measured by the decreasing distance from Western European countries. The distance is still significant; however indicators such as gross national income (GNI) or the number of internet users show rising values. This gap and the potential direction of the process of social change are illustrated in Table 2, which compares Poland, Norway and the United Kingdom using Human Development Index (HDI) indicators. According to modernisation theory, the potential direction of social change is towards well-developed countries, such as Norway and the UK – the destinations for thousands of Polish post-accession migrants.

The table indicates the main fields in which Poland (ranked 35th in HDI in 2014) might be seen as distanced from Norway (1st) and the UK (14th): economic growth, R&D and technology, education and employment. The value of GNI per capita in Poland is three times lower than in Norway. Poland is at the very bottom of the rankings of European countries by R&D support for innovation in technology and business solutions (only 0.7 per cent of GDP in comparison to 1.7 per cent in Norway and 1.8 per cent in the UK). Due to its significant outflow of migrants Poland experiences a significant inflow of migrants' economic transfers (1.48 per cent of GDP). Poland has a high rate of youth unemployment – more than three times higher than in Norway (26.5 per cent compared with 8.6 per cent in Norway and 21 per cent in the UK). However, crucial to our analysis is the fact that the average annual HDI growth for Poland is almost twice as high as for Norway or the UK (0.48 per cent in the period of 2000–2013 compared with 0.28 per cent for Norway and 0.25 per cent for the UK), meaning that Poland's progress towards the model of the modern state is faster than in Scandinavian countries and Western Europe. We might interpret this trend as an attempt to make up for the lost decades of its communist past.



**Table 2. The economic and social gap between Poland and Norway and the UK**

Indicators	Unit	Norway	The UK	Poland	Years
Human Development Index (HDI) rank	rank	1	14	35	2013
HDI	value	0.944	0.892	0.834	2013
Average annual HDI growth	%	0.28	0.25	0.48	2000–2013
Life expectancy at birth	years	81.5	80.5	76.4	2013
Mean years of schooling	years	12.6	12.3	11.8	2012
Gross national income (GNI) <i>per capita</i>	2011 PPP US\$	63.909	35.002	21.487	2013
Inequality in income (%)	%	10.7	18.8	17.9	2013
Gender inequality (seats in parliament)	% held by women	39.6	22.6	21.8	2013
Health expenditure (out of pocket)	% of total health expenditure	13.6	9.2	22.9	2011
Research and development expenditure	% of GDP	1.7	1.8	0.7	2005–2012
Youth unemployment	% aged 15–24	8.6	21.0	26.5	2008–2012
Suicide rates	per 100 000	17.3	10.9	26.4	2003–2009
Remittances, inflows	% of GDP	0.16	0.07	1.48	2011
Net migration rate	per 1 000 people	6.0	2.9	-0.2	2010/2015
Stock of immigrants	% of population	13.8	12.4	1.7	2013
Internet users	% of population	95.0	87.0	65.0	2012

Source: 2014 Human Development Statistical Tables. Online: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data> (accessed: 10 January 2015).

Contrary to the understanding of the last 26 years in Poland as a process of modernisation, post-modernisation theory does not focus on economic and technological aspects of ‘progress’. It sees the shift from modern to post-modern society and its culture mainly in terms of values and identity. In Table 3 we present some indicators of modern (Poland) versus post-modern societies (Norway, the UK). The differences between these two models of society are based on two oppositions: materialist/post-materialist values (Inglehart 2007) and civic/ethnic nationalism (Hutchinson and Smith 1996).

For Polish people traditional values like religion are still significantly more important than for the citizens of Norway or the UK (47.8 per cent compared with 10.5 per cent in Norway and 21 per cent in the UK). Polish people agree that family and work are very important in their lives. They are much less oriented towards participation in social and political life. The share of Poles who value friends is 34.8 per cent (18.8 per cent in Norway, 45.9 per cent in the UK) and politics just 5.3 per cent (9.9 per cent in Norway, 9.2 per cent in the UK). Polish people’s collective identity is centered on the idea of nation understood in essentialist terms. Polish nationalism (in general) should be seen as ethnic nationalism in contrast to Norwegian or British civic nationalism. 37.5 per cent of Poles agree with the statement that to be granted Polish citizenship one has to have Polish ancestors (only 6.7 per cent in Norway); and 40.4 per cent that one has to be born on the country’s soil (only 7.9 per cent in Norway). Norwegian and British people see themselves as autonomous individuals (73.4 per cent in Norway, only 36.1 per cent in Poland) and citizens of a relatively open nation-state, in which anyone who agrees with the basic rules of democracy is welcome, no matter who their ancestors were, where they were born, what language they speak, or what their religion or skin colour.

**Table 3. Two different understandings of ‘what is important’ and ‘who we are’: Poland versus Norway and the UK**

Indexes	Variable	Norway %	UK %	Poland %	Indicator
<b>Values</b>	<i>Family</i>	90.1	93.6	93.9	<i>How important is it in your life? [very important]</i>
	<i>Friends</i>	65.0	68.9	34.8	
	<i>Leisure time</i>	48.8	45.90	30.4	
	<i>Politics</i>	9.9	9.2	5.3	
	<i>Work</i>	52.9	39.10	62.2	
	<i>Religion</i>	10.5	21.0	47.8	
<b>Identity</b>	<i>National self-identification</i>	53.0	54,0	62.2	<i>How proud are you to be [Polish]? [very proud]</i>
	<i>Autonomous individuality</i>	73.4	Nd	36.1	<i>I see myself as an autonomous individual [strongly agree]</i>
	<i>Requirements for citizenship: having ancestors from my country</i>	6.7	Nd	37.5	<i>How important for citizenship: having ancestors from my country [very important]</i>
	<i>Requirements for citizenship: being born on my country's soil</i>	7.9	Nd	40.4	<i>How important for citizenship: being born on my country's soil [very important]</i>

Nd – no data.

Source: Analysis of data from the World Values Survey database, Wave 5 2005–2008 OFFICIAL AGGREGATE v.20140429. World Values Survey Association ([www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org)). Aggregate File Producer: Asep/JDS, Madrid SPAIN (accessed 10 January 2015).

To see the change towards post-materialist values in Poland one has to analyse the whole process of value transformation since the 1990s. Essential data illustrating this transformation can be found in Social Diagnosis 2011 (Czapiński and Panek 2011: 220). Since the 1990s there has been a gradual decline in the importance of traditional values, such as children, marriage and God. At the same time Polish people have become more oriented towards post-materialist values, such as health, friends, optimism, freedom and a strong personality. The shift is significant, leading to a more autonomous and individually oriented society in which the rights of all people are respected, with the right of self-fulfillment being one of the most important. Comparison of the data relating to such values as money (37.2 per cent in 1992 and 28.2 per cent in 2011) might suggest that Polish citizens are becoming better off and therefore less materialistic. Data related to work (26.6 per cent in 1992 compared with 30.7 per cent in 2011) show that Poland remains halfway between a modern and a post-modern society. The process of post-modernisation in Poland since the late 1990s is relatively easy to understand. However, according to many thinkers such as Zygmunt Bauman (1998), the very value of work to individuals changes in a post-modern society. Work no longer offers security and an anchor in the social structure; neither is it the source of identity.

### Literature review, key concepts and the model of non-economic transfers

Sociology as an academic discipline was born to describe and understand various dynamic changes in social life caused by industrialisation and urbanisation. Classical theories of social change owe a great deal to philosophical exploration of the history of humankind and its 'rules'. At least three conceptualisations of social change rooted in the nineteenth century can be identified: (1) evolutionism; (2) the theory of social cycles; and (3) Marxist historical materialism. The common ground for all these theories is the belief that the process of change can be described in the form of a single scheme.

In evolutionism the main scheme of social change is based on the idea of 'progress', a one-directional, endogenous process leading to a better society. This approach is present in modernisation theory. Modernisation is understood as an intentional, goal-oriented process, with members of the modernising society emulating the patterns of the 'modern' society and trying to eliminate the gap between their country and 'modern' ones in such fields as the economy, standards of living, values, behaviours and attitudes. The theory of social cycles is as old as philosophy. In the field of sociology it can be found in Vilfredo Pareto's conceptualisation ([1916] 1994), in which the process of social change is not one-directional but periodical. After the period of equilibrium there is a period of disequilibrium after which the society returns to a state of equilibrium. The Marxist conceptualisation of social change refers to the idea of revolution instigated by social actors changing dominant social relations. Their actions, however, are determined by their positions in the social structure.

Twentieth-century thinkers such as Charles Tilly (1988), Norbert Elias (1980), Anthony Giddens (1984) and Margaret Archer (1996) criticised classical theories of social change. In their works the emphasis shifted from seeking a scheme or 'form' of the history of humankind to seeking the mechanisms which initiate social change. Instead of deterministic visions of the process, they emphasise the role of free choice and the decisions of individual and collective actors, their emotions and whims. Recent theories of social change are focused on understanding the process of change as multi-directional and open. Adherents of the new approach to social change describe society as *in statu nascendi*. Society is understood as the process by which individuals and groups generate and reproduce the context of their own existence. Social structure is the starting point of their actions – on the one hand it can be treated as a closure as we call it in our study (barrier), on the other hand, as stimuli for actions aimed at changing the structure. This approach is present in both historical sociology and the theory of agency. In the case of historical sociology (Norbert Elias, Charles Tilly) social change is the effect of many simultaneous and intersecting processes which may be concurrent or divergent, but the main initiator of each process is the individual or collective actor. The actor operates within the given social environment which both stimulates and simultaneously closes the opportunities for his/her actions. The same rule of the actor in the process of social change is present in the theory of agency (Anthony Giddens, Margaret Archer). The ultimate engine of change is the agency of individuals and the community. Social change occurs on the one hand thanks to the creativity of the actor, and on the other hand is determined by the social structure.

The present study understands social change as the difference between the condition of the social system at one moment in time and its condition at another moment in time (Sztompka 2007). The difference can be related to the composition of society, its social and cultural structures, its borders, the environment or the function of institutions in the society. Our model makes use of both classical and more recent theories of social change. We argue that such fusion is possible and fruitful as it allows macro and micro levels of analysis to be linked to explain the role of the individual in the whole process of change.

In our study of the process of social change in Poland since 1989, we have used essential data to provide the broad context within which migration ought to be analysed. Both modernisation and post-modernisation theories can be useful in the study of non-economic transfers by migrants. The former is focused on economic issues and the latter on the social and cultural aspects of change. Our conceptualisation of social change regards

the return migrant as an actor who might be either the initiator of one of the processes of social change or its propagator. 'Actor' is understood as the individual (migrant) or a group of individuals (migrants) who are able to make decisions and choices, understand the meaning of events, communicate with other actors and influence the activities of other individuals. The return migrant as the actor of social change is the stimulus in the process of both modernisation and post-modernisation at various levels: values, ideas, know-how, behaviours, new elements of free-market and social relations, transnational flows of information and various forms of non-economic capital. Following Agnieszka Weiner (2002), we make a clear distinction between effective actor and potential actor of change. The effective actor has a measurable impact on social change (e.g., through social innovation) at macro level. He/she has access to key institutions of social life, such as government, media and financial institutions. In the effective actor's case there is a strong probability that change will be successfully implemented and widely disseminated. The potential actor is understood as possessing migratory non-economic resources which could be activated by society, but he/she lacks institutional support. In the potential actor's case there is a rather low probability that the modernisation or post-modernisation processes of economic, social and cultural change will be widely and successfully disseminated in Poland.

Researchers to date have used various concepts to discuss and empirically measure non-economic migratory remittances as a specific 'added value' of migration. All of them have their advantages and constraints in empirical practice. The most popular concept refers to the idea of social networks. The concept of social networks as popularised by Mark Granovetter (1973, 2005) is understood as the net of relations between individuals. The volume of publications on social networks is huge and exceeds the size of the article. Among many who have contributed to our better understanding of this phenomena are such authors as Douglas Massey (1990a, 1990b), Alejandro Portes (1995) and Adela Pellegrino (2004). In recent years the issue of social networks in relation to Polish migrants and their families migrating to the UK have been studied by Louise Ryan (Ryan, Sales, Tilki, and Siara 2007) and Anne White (White and Ryan 2008). In the case of migrants their social network is often based on transnational relations. Thanks to these (mainly weak) ties, the migrant can access various resources, so the network becomes the key to resources and might be understood as a resource in itself. On the one hand, the advantage of this kind of conceptualisation is that it can be easily operationalised and allows the strength of migrants' network relations to be measured using such indicators as amount of time spent together, emotional intensity and reciprocal services. On the other hand, this conceptualisation is too narrow and does not allow for the circulation of resources and their impact on social change to be explored.

Another conceptualisation of non-economic remittances is social capital, a very popular concept that has been exploited by many social researchers, thinkers and policy makers. Among the many we mention proponent of the concept Pierre Bourdieu (1986), Robert Putnam (2000) and Francis Fukuyama (1997). Bourdieu understands the concept as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of durable networks of more or less institutionalised relationships. Putnam understands social capital as funded by trust, horizontal networks and the norm of reciprocity. All the authors underline the fact that social capital is the determinant of economic growth. Along with social capital many researchers who are close to Bourdieu's cultural sociology apply his concept of cultural capital. According to this concept individual capital is observable in four forms: the embodied state; the objective state; the institutionalised state; and values/norms/behaviours (Bourdieu 1986). Both concepts can be useful in migration studies but are always connected with studies of power relations, which does not shed particular light on the question of migrants' non-economic transfers.

A more useful concept is the idea of human capital, discussed mainly by economists. James Coleman (1988) understands it as the capital created by changes in persons that bring about skills and capabilities enabling them to act in new ways. This conceptualisation is appropriate to migrants' situation but it is too focused on the innovative use of abilities and professional skills and does not include issues of lifestyles and values.

There has been increasing interest in the concept of social remittances popularised by Peggy Levitt (Levitt 2001, Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). This concept focuses on the circulation of non-economic capital in transnational fields of migrants. This time the conceptualisation seems to be very wide as it includes the ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital that migrants export to their home communities. It includes a mixture of social (social capital) and cultural (norms) elements of various complexities and is not sufficiently precise.

Finally, we come to the conclusion that the notion of social remittances is not only broad but might be misleading as a proxy concept as it emphasises social rather than cultural aspects of non-economic transfers. On the other hand, we find social networks and social/cultural/human capital concepts too narrow, missing important aspects of non-economic remittances. We therefore use the notion of non-economic transfers and remittances to describe the process by which the values, norms, patterns of behaviour, attitudes and lifestyle internalised by migrants abroad, and the transnational social network they become part of with its know-how, knowledge and skills, are introduced into the home country.

Another important notion in our model is the return migrant. Alfred Schütz's figure of the Homecomer (1943) is one of the best metaphors for the return migrant. According to Schütz, the Homecomer is the person who comes back to his/her native socio-cultural environment after significant time spent in a different environment. The Homecomer expects that they are coming back 'home', therefore the system of signification, customs, relations and settings are taken for granted. Unfortunately, they find their 'home' changed. The lost communion with the realities of place ends up with the feeling of being a Stranger (Schütz 1944) in their own country or even feeling 'out of place'. Many adherents of transnational theory would strongly disagree with this phenomenological approach to return migration on the grounds that we live nowadays in a globalising world providing us with technological tools for 'being here' even if physically we are hundreds miles away from 'here'. Internet communication, cheap flights and multiple inter-cultural contacts are supposed to make us construct a transnational social space such that being physically in the UK does not mean we lose contact with 'being mentally' in Poland (Levitt 2001). We argue that the theory of transnationalism has serious limitations. First of all, the ability to build up transnational social networks depends on migrants' level of openness towards members of the host society and their willingness to integrate. The migrant population is extremely heterogeneous in terms of socio-economic status, educational level, cultural competences, occupation, age, migratory decisions and strategies. Therefore, some migrants may merge easily into the host society, while others may live in ethnic ghettos with very little or no contact with representatives of the host society. They might be beneficiaries of various forms of non-economic resources abroad (e.g., a new work ethos) but their main point of reference and the source of their identification is the home country which is being reconstructed in the geographical space of the host country. Second, transnationalism does not greatly consider the issue of belonging as a concept related to individual identity. The concept of belonging is crucial to understanding the phenomenon of 'cultural shock' which is part of return migrants' narratives. We argue that the metaphorical figure of Schütz's Homecomer is still a suitable concept to describe the situation of the return migrant back home. For the migrant who is able to develop a wide transnational social network and merges into the host society, homecoming might be much more of a challenge than for the migrant who retains a strong attachment to home-country realities. However, we argue that the migrant in both cases loses their sense of 'community of time and place', being physically away from home, even if through technology and 'mentally' they are close to their compatriots.

In Polish research literature on homecoming in the context of post-accession migration, there are at least three studies deserving critical evaluation. All of them provide various scenarios of return migration and its impact and all of them end up with the typology of return migrants. In the study by Górny and Kolankiewicz (2002) return migrants are individuals who during their stay abroad can potentially acquire two kinds of capital, cultural and economic (Bourdieu 1986). Coming back to their country of origin they might transfer one, both

or neither of these forms of capital. The analysis leads to the conclusion that we can single out four types of return depending on the kind of capital migrants do or do not transfer to their country. Innovative entrepreneurship is the kind of return linked with transfers of both cultural and economic capital; conservative pensioner is the return connected only to economic capital allowing for a comfortable life back home. Innovative return is connected with the transfer of cultural capital and a loser is the return of a migrant who does not transfer either form of capital. The study explores the issue of return migration and its effect from the individual, micro perspective.

A study by Bieńkowska, Ułasiński and Szymańska (2010) is based on empirical research with return migrants to the Małopolska region. The authors focus on two criteria: (1) the professional career benefits that come from migratory resources; and (2) the accumulation of economic capital (Bourdieu 1986) and its investment. On the basis of these criteria the researchers construct a typology of return migrants and try to statistically depict the profile of returnees to Małopolska region. Tourists (33 per cent of returnees to Małopolska) are the ones who neither benefit from migratory resources, nor accumulate economic capital abroad. Specialists (9 per cent) are returnees who have benefited in their career thanks to migratory resources but do not accumulate economic capital. Investors (34 per cent) are those who accumulate economic capital and invest it in Poland (properties, business, education, consumption). Actors of change (24 per cent) are returnees who both benefit in career terms and accumulate economic capital for investment in Poland. In this study the notion of 'actor of change' is understood from an individual perspective. The 'change' itself relates to the individual's life trajectory and is not understood as socio-cultural change at regional or national level.

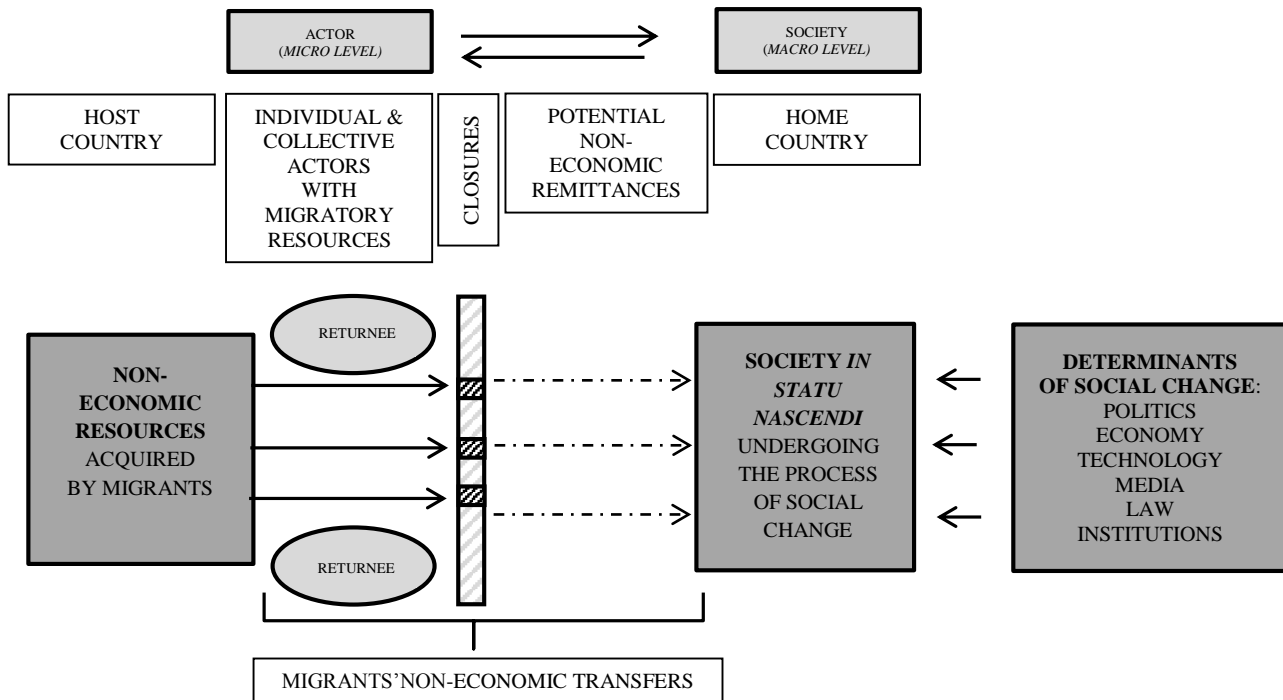
The third and most original study of returnees is the empirical monograph of Izabela Grabowska-Lusińska (2012). The main research question of the study relates to the significance of migration in the career trajectory of return migrants. Grabowska-Lusińska constructs a typology of migrants using a matrix. The criterion for putting the migrant in one of four categories is their position within the matrix. The vertical axis of the matrix is the stability versus fluidity of the career axis; the horizontal axis is the self-agency versus lack of agency axis. In this typology Grabowska-Lusińska does not directly explore the issue of return migrants in the context of transfers but explores the impact of migration on the stability and self-agency of the actor. What makes this work interesting is its both inter-subjective and 'objective' approach to data drawn from in-depth interviews as well as from statistical sources.

None of the studies discussed above answers the question of the extent to which the return Polish migrant can be seen as an 'engine' of social and cultural change in Poland. What we do learn, however, is that individually acquired capital might be an important resource for career development and economic stability for the individual. The return migrant presented in these studies is mainly a potential actor of change. There is little knowledge about the effects of return migration on the local community in terms of new ideas, know-how, lifestyle and social networks. This is the effect of the prevailing application of Bourdieu's conceptualisation of various forms of capital. To apply the notion of non-economic remittances to 'homecoming studies' would seem to be more promising.

The concept of closure used in the present study was originally introduced by Frank Parkin (1979) in his analysis of social mobility. It was understood as the strategy and activity of individuals and professional groups whose aim is to close access to valuable resources and social positions to individuals not seen as 'one of us'. In our study we understand closure as any factor that makes migrants' non-economic transfers and their implementation at regional and national level in the form of non-economic remittances difficult or impossible. Closure might slow down the whole process of social change. It means that the migrant's non-economic resources go unrecognised and are 'wasted' in the home country. Closure does not allow the potential actor of change to be activated. We identify three main types of closure in our model: socio-economic, cultural and psycho-social. Socio-economic closures are factors which come from the social and economic system at any

given time, such as unemployment or low social capital in the country. Cultural closures are factors that are present in the cultural structure of the sending society, such as common norms, values and behaviours. Psycho-social closures relate to personality, attitudes and mental structure. These key elements of our theoretical model of return migrants' non-economic transfers to the home country are illustrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Model of migrants' non-economic transfers to home country (society undergoing social change)**



### Methodology and data analysis: closures to migrants' transfers

In our study we pose the following questions:

What are the closures to migrants' non-economic transfers in the context of contemporary Polish society undergoing the process of social change?

The more specific question allowing more precise exploration of the general question is:

What elements (variables) should be taken into consideration to empirically measure resistance to non-economic transfers and its impact on the dynamics and direction of social change in Poland?

Our model includes obligatory conditions for successful non-economic transfers by migrants to Poland. First, the migrant has to acquire ideas, identity, know-how, behaviours or elements of lifestyle abroad so that they can be introduced in Poland. Second, the migratory resources have to be seen as innovative from the perspective of the native cultural or social structure and the migrant themselves (they may or may not be convergent with the direction of social change). Third, the return migrant has to become an effective actor of social change.

Last but not least, the level of dissemination (local community, nationwide) depends on the ‘permeability’ of closures.

To answer the first question we will identify socio-economic, cultural and psycho-social closures. To answer the second question we will try to estimate the impact of potential migrants’ transfers on the dynamics of social change. Our analysis is based on existing data. In the analysis of socio-economic closure we refer to data from the European Social Survey (2008), the Central Statistical Office (CSO) and data from research by Henryk Domański (2008), Anna Fiń, Agnieszka Legut, Witold Nowak, Michał Nowosielski and Kamila Schöll-Mazurek (2013) and Mariusz Dzięglewski (2015). In the analysis of cultural closures we refer to data from the World Values Survey (Wave 5: 2005–2008 and Wave 6: 2010–2014), the International Social Survey Programme National Identity (ISSP 2003), and studies by Joanna Rostek (2011), Mariusz Dzięglewski (2013, 2016) and the research project conducted by the author in 2015. The research was conducted between 31 June and 30 September 2015, in the Social Research Laboratory at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Pedagogical University of Cracow. An on-line survey (CAWI) was conducted on the quota sample of 582 internet users. The quotas (including age, education level and place of residence) were applied on the basis of the results of the nationwide representative survey – NET TRACK 2015. The very low response rate, self-selection bias and typical limitations of such surveys are the main causes of the poor reliability of these kinds of data. However, data collected by national research institutions or other research institutes based on random sampling mainly concern respondents’ declared willingness to leave the home country. So far, there have not been any public opinion surveys on the effects of migration that would support the outcomes of the author’s research and show similar patterns. In the analysis of psycho-social closures we make use of data from works on ‘cultural shock’ in the context of return migration by Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska, Anna Kwiatkowska and Joanna Roszak (2010), Sławomir Trusz and Magdalena Kwiecień (2012) and the author’s research projects (2011, 2015). The data analysis will refer to both raw data and findings from research projects published in the form of monographs or reports.

There are three stages to the analysis. The first stage proposes the hypothetical closures to migrants’ transfers. The second stage demonstrates the extent to which they are present in the context of return migration to Poland on the basis of existing data. The final stage estimates the impact of potential transfers on social change in Poland.

### *Socio-economic closures*

What we call socio-economic closures are the barriers to transfer and dissemination of non-economic remittances created by the entire social and economic system in Poland. Socio-economic closures result in serious constraints on return migrants’ transfers. Exploration of recent literature in migration studies suggests the following factors which we are seeking to verify:

1. Economic factors (rate of unemployment, especially among young graduates).
2. Very low level of social capital in Poland.<sup>1</sup>
3. Ambiguity of access to labour market for returnees.
4. Lack of cohesive policy to make use of migrants’ non-economic resources at government/macro level.

The economic factors are among the key issues explaining the very low level of return migration to Poland in recent years. The labour market situation for young graduates can be a huge barrier to potential returnees and is linked to the devaluation of tertiary-level qualifications in Poland. The education boom of the late 1990s saw an extraordinary increase in the number of graduates (over 150 per cent within 15 years) and the number



of tertiary-level degree holders rose from 9.9 per cent in 2002 to 17 per cent in 2011.<sup>2</sup> For this huge cohort of graduates, their inadequate educational profile led to an increase in the number of unemployed graduates (2 per cent of all unemployed in 1999 and 15.5 per cent in 2013).<sup>3</sup>

Another socio-economic closure in potential non-economic transfers is the extremely low level of social capital in Poland. According to the European Social Survey 2008 (data from Czapiński and Panek 2011: 285) Poland ranks among the lowest of European countries whose population aged 16+ trust other people (13 per cent). This share is almost twice as low as the average in Europe (23.4 per cent) and more than four times lower than the level of trust in such countries as Denmark, Ireland and Sweden. Social capital plays a vital role in the re-adaptation of returnees, so its low level might lead to reserved and distant attitudes towards new ideas, know-how, behaviours and any social innovation of which migrants might be the propagators. Low levels of social capital do not allow social innovation, even if it is in line with the direction of social change, to be widely disseminated among society.

Another socio-economic closure is ambiguity of access to the labour market. The patterns of social mobility analysed by Henryk Domański (2008) are centered around the system of 'inherited positions'. The level of meritocracy based on the indicators of homogeneous marriage and social relation patterns is low. Returnees have to find a place within the network system of family and friends to which they might no longer belong. However, there have been some institutional projects and initiatives on the part of the Polish government to 'make use' of return migrants' unique resources (see, for example, Powroty.gov.pl). So far these have not been evaluated and we could not observe any cohesive policy towards returnees at the national level.

The same might be said of the policy towards the Polish diaspora, evaluated in the report by Anna Fiń *et al.* (2013) as ineffective. Only 8.1 per cent of respondents (Polish migrants) in this research project considered Polish policy towards migrants positive; 44.9 per cent regarded it as negative. The socio-economic closure in this case is the structural lack of any institutionalised facilities for migrants and return migrants.

In the absence of socio-economic closures, successful non-economic transfers by migrants would have an enormous impact on the dynamics of social change – accelerating the process of transformation to a model of modern and post-modern society. Overcoming the problem of unemployment and the wage gap between Poland and Western countries would lead to a significant rise in the number of return migrants, as (apart from lifestyle migration) economic migration remains the main reason for migration. More returnees means more opportunities for non-economic transfers. The issue of social capital is extremely complex, but a shift towards a society of trust would allow the new know-how, behaviours, skills and lifestyles that returnees bring from abroad to be more easily absorbed and disseminated. In the hands of policy makers, the issues of the access to labour market for returnees and cohesive policy to make use of migrants' non-economic resources could become institutionalised 'tunnels' facilitating non-economic transfers. Two potential tunnels could be (1) a government programme 'easing' access to the labour market for individuals who have qualified abroad, and (2) for migrants who want to return and who possess non-economic resources, a bundle of solutions for 'making use' of these resources in Poland and facilitating their re-integration into their home country. At local community level, solutions such as Home Town Associations have been implemented in many emigration countries, enabling effective co-operation between migrants and local authorities in the home country. The list of such solutions is long: organising local community information platforms/centres for returnees; monitoring of migration and returns; quick and effective procedures for recognising qualifications; training schemes for return migrants; and support/working groups for returnees.

At this stage it is difficult to precisely estimate the impact of the resistance to non-economic transfers on the dynamics of social change in Poland. Further research is needed to verify the thesis on the potential acceleration of the process in the absence of socio-economic closures as one element of the complex prognostic model.

### *Cultural closures*

Cultural closures means the barriers to non-economic remittances created by the Polish cultural structure. Cultural structure is understood as the independent variable which leads us to understand the behavior and motivations of social actors. The cultural closures identified in our study, which play a vital role in resistance to migrants' remittances, are:

1. Social narratives on migration.
2. Cultural values and patterns of behaviour.
3. Mechanisms of cultural diffusion.

We understand social narrative as the process of collective imagination within which actors find themselves inside the story, myth and play roles assigned to them (Alexander 2010). The social narrative is the main source of moral judgment and provides the actor with the direction for any action. What people know about migration is partly the interplay between their own experiences, interactions with other people (migrants or non-migrants) and the stories which come from the media (press, soap operas, literature) and political debate. All these sources come together to construct social consciousness and expectations concerning migrants and returnees. An analysis of media narratives in the Polish press (Dzięglewski 2013) and soap operas (Dzięglewski 2015) in the last ten years reveals that migration presented from a macro-structural perspective is seen as a negative, dangerous process mostly generating troubles (migratory delinquency, weakening of family ties, break-ups, Euro-orphans, brain drain, depopulation) with few benefits. Narratives depicting individual migrants' trajectories are more ambivalent. On one hand, migration is linked to the many benefits of economic and cultural capital, on the other hand, it comes at a psychological cost. The main costs are family separation, stress, depression, homesickness, alienation and social deprivation. Among the benefits are economic stability, life experience, a dominant U-shaped career progression, accumulation of cultural capital, personal development and new lifestyle. The most challenging narrative comes from the soap opera *Londyńczycy* which depicts the transnational model of the family and an American Dream-type migrant's career (Rostek 2011). The series represents migration as an optimistic self-realisation project, showing young migrants as the main beneficiaries of migration in terms of cultural capital acquisition and the development of self-agency.<sup>4</sup> The media narratives are reflected in public opinion on the costs and benefits of migration for the individual, region and sending country (Table 4).

Among respondents there is a predominantly negative perception of the consequences of migration for the region and for society as a whole. Public opinion sees migration as endangering development both nationally and regionally. The most negative perception of migration can be observed in older respondents (aged over 65). Among the benefits of migration respondents only point out the increase in Polish people's mobility. Their opinions echo press narratives between 2004 and 2012 (Figure 3).

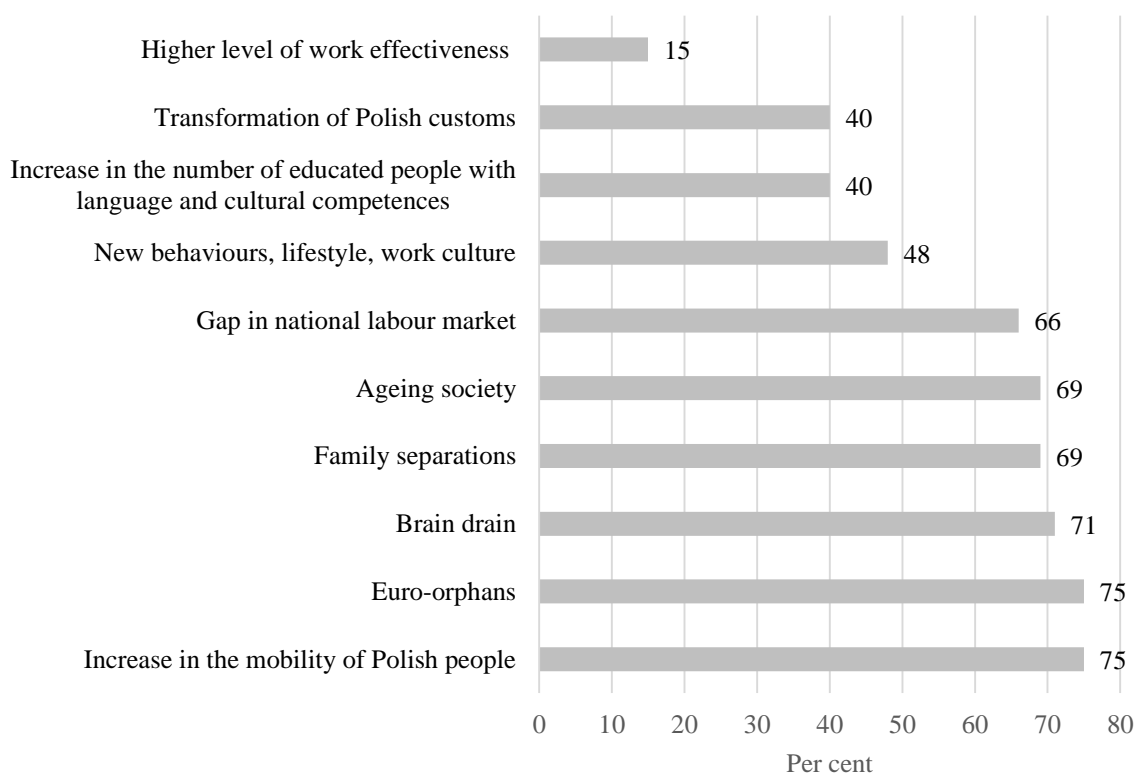
**Table 4. Respondents' opinion on the consequences of emigration for the migrant, respondent's region and the whole country**

Scale	<i>Does emigration in general generate benefits or costs for...? (%)</i>		
	The migrant	The region You live in	The country
-2 (enormous loss)	2.9	18.9	35.4
-1	5.5	36.3	28.5
0	12.4	29.6	21.1
1	51.2	13.1	12.5
+2 (huge benefits)	28.0	2.2	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's survey (CAWI), 2015, N = 582.

**Figure 3. Consequences of emigration for the whole country in respondents' opinion**

Are the given phenomena the effects of migration for the whole country?  
(% of answers 'rather yes' and 'definitely yes')



Source: Author's survey (CAWI), 2015, N = 582.

Respondents mention Euro-orphans, brain drain, family separations, ageing society and gaps in the labour market as the main consequences of migration from Poland. Significantly fewer respondents saw migration as a potential source of benefits to the country, such as changing behaviours, new working cultures, transformation of Polish customs, brain gain or increased effectiveness at work. To sum up, social narratives on migration pre-dispose members of Polish society to have a negative attitude towards migration as endangering

the country and unrealistic expectations of returnees (Londyńczy). These attitudes and expectations form an impenetrable cultural closure for non-economic remittances.

Another cultural closure identified in our study refers to cultural values and behaviours measured by the declared importance of values, goals for the country/individual and the level of openness to ‘others’. A comparative analysis of publicly available data from representative international surveys (International Social Survey Programme and World Values Survey) reveals significant differences between Poland as one of the post-communist countries and Western European countries (Germany, France, the UK). First, Polish people significantly more often mention traditional (religion, see Table 5) and material values (like a stable economy) as important to them and for their country (Table 6).

**Table 5. Indicators of religiosity**

Country/Region of Europe	<i>How important is God in your life? (1 = not at all important, 10 = very important)<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>How often do you attend religious services?<sup>b</sup></i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Once a week or more (percentage)</i>
Germany	4.33	8.5
France	4.65	7.2
Great Britain	5.49	16.5
Poland	7.76	50.3
Hungary	5.22	10.9
Bulgaria	5.45	6.5
<b>Western Europe</b>	4.83	10.8
<b>Central and Eastern Europe</b>	5.80	17.4

<sup>a</sup> N = 11 112; <sup>b</sup> N = 10 473.

Source: Calculations for variables V8 and V9 based on the databases of World Values Survey Wave 5 (2005–2008) and Wave 6 (2010–2014).

The value of God as very important in respondents’ lives was declared much more often by Poles than any other nationality surveyed (average value for Poland is 7.46 in comparison to 4.33 for Germany and 5.22 for Hungary). The declaration is in line with religious practices. 50.3 per cent of Polish people take part in religious services once a week or more often – six times more often than Germans and eight times more often than the French.

The difference in value systems is visible at the axis of materialist/post-materialist values (Inglehart 2007; see Table 6). Economic growth (a materialist value) is much more important for Poles (56.4 per cent) than for Germans (49.2 per cent) or Britons (37.7 per cent). The aesthetic appearance of towns and villages (post-materialist value) is important only for 3.1 per cent of Poles in contrast to 12.7 per cent of French and 7.6 per cent of British people. Materialist values can be traced in patterns of conspicuous consumption (Veblen 1986). Return migrants’ economic transfers are spent by family members investing in home improvements and luxury goods which are aimed at drawing attention to the individual’s economic status (Garapich and Osipovič 2007).

Attitudes towards the ‘others’ in Poland are less open than in Western European countries, which we can observe by analysing attitudes towards the national community (Table 7).

**Table 6. Aspirations for the country for the next 10 years (N = 10 832)**

Country/Region of Europe	Aspirations for the country for the next 10 years (%)					
	<i>A. High level of economic growth</i>	<i>B. Making sure this country has strong defence forces</i>	<i>C. Seeing that people have more say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities</i>	<i>D. Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful</i>	<i>Materialist values (A+B)</i>	<i>Post-materialist values (C+D)</i>
Germany	49.2	3.7	40.0	7.1	52.9	47.1
France	40.1	7.1	40.1	12.7	47.2	52.8
Great Britain	37.7	12.4	42.3	7.6	50.1	49.9
Poland	56.4	5.2	35.3	3.1	61.6	38.4
Hungary	71.0	7.3	17.4	4.3	78.3	21.7
Bulgaria	79.8	4.4	10.8	5.0	84.2	15.8
<b>Western Europe</b>	<b>42.4</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>40.8</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>49.9</b>
<b>Central and Eastern Europe</b>	<b>71.6</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>77.4</b>	<b>22.6</b>

Source: Calculations for variable V70/V61 based on the World Values Survey database, Wave 5 (2005–2008) and Wave 6 (2010–2014).

**Table 7. Criteria for being ‘native’ (Polish, German, etc.)**

Country/Region of Europe	<i>To be born in the country<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>To be Protestant/Catholic/etc.<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>To feel Polish, German, etc.<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>To have ancestors in the country<sup>d</sup></i>
	<i>Important and very important (%)</i>			
Germany	57.4	37.1	74.4	48.4
France	61.1	17.5	92.0	49.2
Great Britain	73.4	34.8	79.4	51.5
Poland	87.8	74.8	97.0	84.7
Hungary	71.2	43.2	97.1	79.2
Bulgaria	89.9	76.2	98.8	Nd
<b>Western Europe</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>84.2</b>	<b>49.6</b>
<b>Central and Eastern Europe</b>	<b>83.4</b>	<b>65.6</b>	<b>97.6</b>	<b>82.3</b>

<sup>a</sup> N = 6 509; <sup>b</sup> N = 6 322; <sup>c</sup> N = 6 466; <sup>d</sup> N = 5 397.

Nd – no data.

Source: Calculations for variables 3a, 3e, 3g, 3h based on International Social Survey Programme: National Identity II – ISSP 2003 database. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA3910 Data file Version 2.1.0.

84.7 per cent of Poles argue that to be Polish one has to have ancestors in Poland (only 48.4 in Germany and 49.2 per cent in France). 71.2 per cent Polish people agree that to be Polish one has to be born in the country

(57.4 per cent in Germany, 61.1 per cent in France). The data reveal an attitude of distance from those who were not born in or do not have any ancestors in Poland.

The data analysed reveal relatively little openness to people of different cultures or religions. It is an indication of how little openness exists to social or cultural innovation that could potentially be brought back home by return migrants. We might suppose that such innovation is seen in Poland as endangering legitimised, traditional cultural practices and routines – and this translates into cultural closure.

These comparative analyses of the data suggest that return migrants coming back from well-developed, post-materialist societies are likely to internalise values and attitudes which do not suit the Polish cultural structure, therefore the transfers are likely to be resisted.

The final cultural closure identified is the mechanism of cultural diffusion itself. The dissemination of return migrants' new ideas, social innovations, cultural behaviours or know-how depends on the general rules applying to any diffusion. The classical rules of cultural diffusion introduced by Ralph Linton (1936) might be applied to a return migrant as a medium for non-economic transfer. Although this issue has not been studied in detail in relation to post-accession migration from Poland, some of these rules can easily be observed. Linton argues that practices or technologies are more likely to be introduced than any changes in the value system. Patterns that are in line with the cultural structure will be more likely to be absorbed. In other words, it is more likely (according to Linton's rules) that the migrant would implement new applications on his office computer than change his attitudes to religion. Similarly, it is more likely that the migrant would make use of his language skills developed abroad (as that kind of competence is highly valued on the labour market in Poland) than that he would address new clients visiting his company in an informal, familiar way, which would be regarded as vulgar through the lens of the Polish cultural structure. Therefore, we argue that the very mechanism of diffusion is another cultural closure.

Cultural closures are probably the most challenging dimensions for successful non-economic transfers. Changes in patterns of behaviour or value systems do not occur quickly. These are deep changes in the cultural structure of the society. Resistance to migrants' transfers is weakened by endogenous processes of social change in Poland (discussed in the first part of the article). In this case we can pose the hypothesis that while returnees coming back from well-developed, post-modern societies are to some extent the accelerators of social change, the cultural structure itself impedes their potential impact. The impact needs to be measured more precisely by prospective researchers.

### *Psycho-social closures*

What we mean by psycho-social closure is a psychological barrier experienced by return migrants which leads to blockage of the non-economic transfers. The evidence for these kinds of closure is still anecdotal and comes mainly from psychology and education studies. Therefore at this stage we might pose limited hypotheses on the basis of fragmentary research and observations. The most probable psycho-social closures might be defined as:

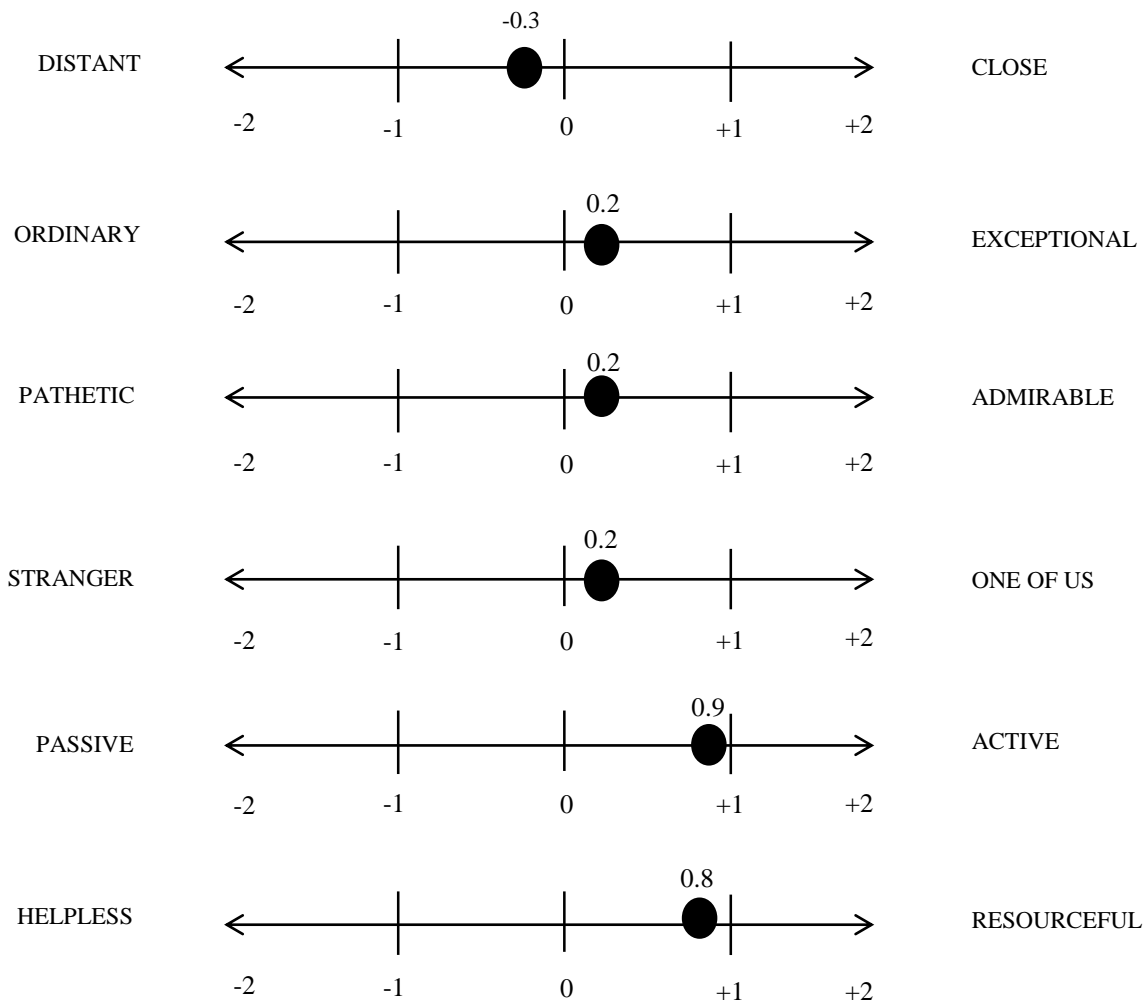
1. 'Homecomer syndrome' in the process of re-adaptation (Schütz 1943).
2. 'Us' and 'them' division (Dzięglewski 2011).

In some studies of the situation of return migrants (especially teenagers), authors use the term 'cultural shock' to describe the emotional and psychological reaction of returnees (Grzymała-Moszczyńska, Kwiatkowska, and Roszak 2010; Trusz and Kwiecień 2012). We are more confident in using the concept 'Homecomer syndrome'

as a more appropriate description of the wide range of emotional and cognitive reactions experienced by returnees once they are 'home'. The high level of emotional tension created by a return after a few years' stay abroad is quite often connected to the attachment of the migrant to patterns, social and cultural structures from the past (before leaving the country of origin). This attachment is the basis for misleading expectations of what it means to be 'back home'. The homecoming is never a return to the patterns and structures of the past, as they have changed over time (*panta rhei*). The returnee is never the same person who left the country, home is never the place they left. What is emotionally and psychologically difficult for the returnee is the lost sense of 'community of time and place'. This leads to psychological and emotional difficulties in the process of re-adaptation: a feeling of alienation, being misunderstood and 'out of place'.

The second psycho-social closure is the mental division between 'us' (return migrants) and 'them' (non-migrants). This division is based on the differences in identities, values and attitudes revealed by migrants in the course of their in-depth narratives (Dzięglewski 2011). Some differences are also noticed and described by members of the native society and translate into a social distance towards returnees (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Respondents' attitudes towards return migrants**



Note: The data refer to mean values on the scale (-2, -1, 0, +1, +2) where the opposite extremes of the scale are the opposite adjectives describing the return migrant, e.g. resourceful (+2); helpless (-2).

Source: Author's survey (CAWI), 2015, N = 582.

The data reveal that the return migrant tends to be seen by members of his/her society (migrants and non-migrants) as distant (mean: -0.3), not a stranger but not entirely 'one of us' (0.2). The social distance between the native society and the migrant is measured by the high level of expectations about returnees who are seen as very resourceful (0.8), active (0.9) and exceptional (0.2).

The first psycho-social closure (Homecomer syndrome) is constructed by return migrants themselves and is due to many factors such as individual personality, the length of stay abroad, the strength of ties with compatriots, etc. For one individual re-adaptation might be a really difficult process, and for others much easier, but this closure should be another element in the prognostic model analysing the impact of migrants' non-economic transfers. The second psycho-social closure ('us' and 'them') is constructed by the native society. We might suppose that any social or cultural innovation (behaviour, attitudes, ideas) that return migrants wanted to transfer to the country of origin would meet with scrupulous and critical investigation and potential resistance from members of the native society, who see returnees as potentially resourceful and active but do not seek interaction with them. This closure is well documented in the data and should form part of future research analysis.

## Conclusions

In our article we have described Polish society as undergoing dynamic social change (*in statu nascendi*), the important aspect of which is the political, economic and socio-cultural transformation that began in 1989. This change is portrayed as the process of transformation from a pre-modern society to a model of the well-developed, post-modern Western societies migrants are returning from. Post-accession migration from Poland is seen as an integral part of this change. On the one hand, migration is the effect of social change, on the other hand, it has an important impact on the direction and dynamics of the change. The return migrant as an individual and return migrants as collective agents are seen as the potential actors of change through their non-economic transfers. These transfers are understood as the introduction and dissemination in the home country of migrants' non-economic remittances, such as the values, norms, behaviours and attitudes, and lifestyle internalised by migrants abroad as well as the transnational social network they became part of with its associated know-how, knowledge and skills. Obligatory conditions for successful transfers to Poland are the acquisition of ideas, know-how, behaviours or elements of lifestyle abroad, returnee(s) being in the position of effective actor(s) of social change (having access to key institutions), and the relative 'permeability' of closures.

We use the concept of closure as any factor that makes migrants' non-economic transfers and their introduction at regional and national level in the form of non-economic remittances difficult or impossible. In our study we identified three kinds of closures: socio-economic, cultural and psycho-social. Socio-economic closures are mainly the barriers constructed by the Polish economic and social system. Cultural closures are the barriers in cultural structure understood as the independent variable which leads us to understand the behaviour and motivations of social actors. Psycho-social closures are the mental barriers on the part of both return migrants and the native society. In our analysis we offered the hypothetical closures which ought to be implemented as independent variables in a more precise model analysing the impact of resistance to non-economic transfers on the direction and the dynamics of social change in Poland. The closures – where possible – were described using existing empirical data. Among the socio-economic closures we identified such barriers as: economic factors (unemployment); low social capital in Poland; ambiguity of access to the labour market; and the absence of a cohesive policy of making use of non-economic remittances at national level. Among the cultural closures we identified: social narratives of migration which lead to negative attitudes and social distance towards return migrants; cultural values and patterns of behaviour that are elements of cultural structure and the mechanism of cultural diffusion. Among psycho-social closures we identified two barriers: the 'Homecomer syndrome' in migrants' re-adaptation; and the psychological division between return migrants and



members of the native society. The former is the psychological dissonance between the return migrant's expectations and everyday life back in Poland, which results in feelings of alienation, being a 'stranger' or 'out of place'. The latter takes the form of distance towards return migrants on the part of the migrant's native society. We suggest that all these closures should be taken into account in any attempt to assess the impact of non-economic transfers on social change in Poland. Although this claim still needs to be verified by further studies, we argue that migrants' non-economic transfers are accelerating the process of social change in Poland. Closures impede the implementation of migrants' non-economic remittances, hence impeding the whole process of social change.

This model which analyses the closures on non-economic transfers in the specific context of social change in Poland can, we believe, be applied to other post-communist societies with a similar trajectory. Each case should consider the specific context of social change and it is the intensity of migration that can be seen as the limitation of the model. Our study has important implications for policy making as it identifies some of the barriers which might become subjects of regulation potentially transforming these closures into institutionalised 'tunnels' for migrants' non-economic transfers.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Social capital is understood here in Robert Putnam's way as a 'generalised trust'.

<sup>2</sup> Source: years 2004–2011: CSO, *Szkoły wyższe i ich finanse w latach 2004–2011*; years 2001–2003: CSO, *Small Statistical Yearbook of 2001, 2002, 2003*.

<sup>3</sup> Source: years 1999–2005: CSO, *Small Statistical Yearbook, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004*; years 2006–2014: CSO, *Badanie aktywności ekonomicznej ludności (BAEL), IV kwartał*. The detailed analysis of this process can be found in Dzięglewski (2015).

<sup>4</sup> Detailed content analysis of the main Polish magazines is available in a research report by Dzięglewski (2013). The key findings of the research on two Polish soap operas, *Londyńczycy* and *Wyjechani* are discussed in Dzięglewski (2015, 2016).

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## — BOOK REVIEWS —

**Izabela Grabowska, Michał P. Garapich, Ewa Jaźwińska, Agnieszka Radziwinowiczówna (2016). *Migrants As Agents of Change. Social Remittances in an Enlarged European Union*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 249 pp.**

*Migrants As Agents of Change* makes a significant contribution to the existing theoretical, methodological and empirical literature on social remittances. Several international conferences and workshops on social remittances have taken place in recent years, and this is currently one of the most fruitful areas of migration research. The conferences have been particularly exciting because they brought together researchers working on sending *and* receiving countries, or on both, as in the case of *Migrants As Agents of Change*. This is a welcome development in view of the frequent separation between the two halves of migration studies.

The monograph presents the results of a three-year longitudinal research project in Poland (Pszczyna, Sokółka and Trzebnica) and the United Kingdom (various locations). The project was funded by the National Science Centre (*Narodowe Centrum Nauki*) under the title *Cultural Diffusion Through Social Remittances Between Poland and UK*. Earlier in 2016, two of the authors, Grabowska and Garapich, published their argument in condensed form in an article in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (Izabela Grabowska and Michał P. Garapich (2016), Social Remittances and Intra-EU Mobility: Non-Financial Transfers Between UK and Poland, *JEMS*, 42(13): 2146–2162). However, the article is not a substitute for the book, which affords space for the authors to weave a complex argument and to present their empirical material in rich detail.

Social remittances are sometimes seen as a catch-all category – all forms of transfer resulting from migration which are not strictly economic, including indirect social impacts such as changing gender

relations or new patterns of social stratification. Grabowska *et al.* focus on the type of remittance where one person transfers ideas and behaviours directly to another, which mostly occurs when a migrant returns to their place of origin, to visit or settle. They are particularly interested in social skills and also in ‘more nuanced and latent social remittances pertaining to attitudes to cultural diversity, value pluralism and civic participation’ (p. 221). As the authors write on p. 6: ‘Our book takes social remittances as a lens through which to examine grassroot, nitty-gritty relationships between migration and change. We focus on the micro and meso processes by which continuities and changes in personal and community lives are worked out across time, borders and transnational social spaces’. *Migrants As Agents of Change* provides many pointers as to how to research this type of social remittance.

First, it makes a powerful case for ethnography. The research project was based on a grounded theory approach: the interviewers went into the field with open minds and, rather than seeking evidence of specific types of remittance (and therefore missing others), took note of what was to be seen. This enabled them to find many types of remitting whose existence could not have been guessed, as well as numerous observations of potential remittances being blocked and resisted. Such non-remitting is clearly a significant part of the story. Attempts which fail, because the migrant, for example, is perceived as being pushy, shed light on why other transfers are more successful, for instance because they are subtler and arise from the sharing of opinions or activities, or the ‘social example’ of someone respected in the neighbourhood. Moreover, resistance appears to be very widespread. The authors speculate (p. 216) that ‘in fact, resistance to remittances may well be more common than acceptance, acting as a brake to homogenisation and overall globalisation’. As they further point out (p. 217): ‘The novelties, innovations and new ideas

that Polish migrants brought back from Britain were not that self-evidently superior and better. Indeed, for some Polish citizens they symbolised everything that is wrong with the urban or Western lifestyle’.

Second, the authors demonstrate the importance of investigating the specific transnational social spaces inhabited by their interviewees, of finding out about their particular social networks and the particular sites (especially workplaces) where migrants and stayers may pick up and transfer new ideas. The exact geographical locations are important, too, since different places have different migration traditions and cultures and this can make them more or less susceptible to migration-induced change. Since social remitting is all about connections between sending and receiving countries, it is particularly helpful to conduct research in both countries, even though this can be challenging methodologically. In many (I suspect most) cases, Polish towns do not have links predominantly to one particular location in the UK. The authors found that Sokółka migrants did mostly head for London, but that migrants from Trzebnica and Pszczyna were much more scattered. Migrants also have their own specific characteristics, and certain individuals have a greater propensity to succeed as agents of change, not just because of their personalities but also because, for example, they play a recognised socially useful role in the community, such as a nurse or pet-shop owner, and possess a network of local contacts.

Third (as also set out clearly in the *JEMS* article), it is important for the purpose of analysis to divide the social remitting process into stages. The authors turn their microscope on each stage of the process. Successful remitting depends on a migrant acquiring new ideas in the first place. In other words, upon coming into contact with ‘unfamiliarity and difference’, the migrant may imitate, or in some cases, creatively adapt the ideas they encounter. Upon returning to the country of origin, the migrant may be able to pass on this novelty to stayers. However, the transfer will only be successful if the stayers in their turn imitate or creatively adapt the foreign idea. In practice, the migrant is often shy about trying to diffuse new ideas for fear these will be rejected; in other

cases, the migrant makes the attempt, but fails. In cases where migrants have succeeded, their immediate associates should be putting their ideas into practice, and the project included interviews with ‘followers’ – stayers who had been impressed by the agents of change. One might assume that, in this day and age, face-to-face transmission of ideas had become less important, but the authors show convincingly that this is not the case. Hence ‘migrants may initiate bottom-up change processes’ (p. 215), although the authors are careful to point out that this is rarely conspicuous except on a very local level.

Overall, this is a very imaginative and scholarly book, which makes a substantial theoretical and empirical contribution to existing migration scholarship, and deserves to be widely read.

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**Anne J. Kershen (ed.) (2015). *London the Promised Land Revisited. The Changing Face of the London Migrant Landscape in the Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Oxford: Routledge, 237 pp.**

*London the Promised Land Revisited* (2015), edited by Anne Kershen, comes as a timely continuation of *London the Promised Land? The Migrant Experience in a Capital City* (1997), the first volume in the series on ‘Migration and Diaspora’, edited by the same author. This second edited collection continues to trace the impact of immigration on London by exploring a set of trends that construct the intensity and diversity of its contemporary landscape, this time relying on an almost completely new set of contributors. The prolific concept of ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec 2007) forms the theoretical backbone of the collection, and its main themes – visibility and invisibility, integration and separation, transnationalism and location – provide the glue that attempts to link the thirteen chapters into a coherent whole. As Kershen notes (p. 3) super-diversity is not only the conceptual prism adopted here but also a characteristic that describes the diverse professional expertise of the contributors,

who include medical consultants, policy advisers, sociologists, anthropologists, geographers, political scientists and urban planners. The contribution of this collection to the field of migration studies lies in its clear demonstration of the dynamic nature of international population movements and its engagement with a wide variety of thematic perspectives and empirical evidence. By successfully building bridges across different fields this edited volume manages the difficult task of drawing a well-integrated and comprehensive picture of London's twenty-first century migrant landscape, a macro focus that, however, acknowledges the specificities and nuances of migrant experience.

The socio-economic and historical conjuncture at which this collection comes needs to be recognised as one marked by the increasing efforts of Western European governments to secure 'fortress Europe' and erect new ideological and material borders that divide populations. In hostile local and political responses, migrants coming from within and outside the continent are constructed as a threat to national security and welfare-state resources. The tightening of migration policies in the light of what has now become a permanent austerity regime has been undertaken with new zeal by the recently re-elected British Conservative government that came to power with the promise of making 'Great Britain greater' and 'free movement less free'. The breeding of nationalist rhetoric and anti-EU sentiments have resulted in the creation of a hostile environment in which discrimination against minority groups, and their social and economic marginalisation, are justified by cultural and religious differences and the unwillingness of these groups to integrate (Modood 2005). We need to be reminded that migrants' struggles remain part of global labour-capitalist relations and are dependent on the historical and heterogeneous specificities of class, gender, identity and religion and the tensions these produce (De Genova 2013). This collection, unfortunately, fails to embrace this critical and engaging spirit and instead employs the concept of 'super-diversity' while remaining blind to its pitfalls and ideological purposes.

The concept of 'super-diversity' has gained significant prominence in research focusing on urban diversity and developments in global cities where its salience is claimed to rest on the empirical reality of the high level of complexity brought about by post-colonial migration (Vertovec 2007). Meissner (2015) posits that the value of the concept lies in linking different debates in migration studies, ethnic and religious studies, diaspora identity studies and others. This collection takes on the task of exploring the impact of migration on London, focusing explicitly on the last two decades, which Kershen believes have been particularly exceptional as 'the coming together in time and space of so many variations of ethnic and national background, together with the gamut of legal/illegal statuses, an extensive range of employable skills, of not only different religions and an assortment of dialectics within an array of languages plus gender and the span of migrant ages, that make London a perfect template for super-diversity' (p. 3). Kershen attributes super-diversity to the changing demography of the migrant population which has turned the landscape of the capital from diverse to super-diverse, thus creating a 'symbiosis of the lens and the social context it is applied to' (Pavlenko, in press). The term is therefore used on one hand as a conceptual prism identifying certain variables and on the other to describe an empirical reality in which these variables form complex interconnections. Drawing on the original super-diversity variables outlined by Vertovec (2007) in his initial article, Anne Kershen considers place of origin, language, religion, economic activity and processes of integration/separation, while lamenting the social reality of the concept, in her exploration of the intensified diversity of London's immigrant population. In an effort to prove the contemporary exceptionalism of the super-diversity framework, much in contrast to her own historical overview of London's migration past, she bombards us with official data (including some from less reliable sources<sup>1</sup>) on the increase in the number of non-UK born residents and the arrival of new migrant groups, the wide range of languages and religious beliefs, and the economic profiles of these

groups' members. The novelty of the social phenomenon of super-diversity has been contested, however, by historians (De Bock 2015: 583) and decolonial critiques reminding us of the pre-modern traces of increased mobility and connectivity that characterised the pluralistic nature and cultural and linguistic bricolage of first-world cities in civilisations in the Global South as well as the Global North (Ndhlovu 2016; Pavlenko, in press). The superficial and uncritical engagement with the notion of 'super-diversity' that characterises this edited collection, together with unconvincing attempts to empirically back up this 'new' social phenomenon along the lines of 'London is super-diverse because it is more than diverse', render it nothing more than an empty slogan in an academic brand-establishing exercise. The failure of the contributors to analytically engage with the concept, and its intermittent conflation with multiculturalism, lead to the reproduction of many of the limitations and ideological traps that the two concepts bring with them.

By consistently evoking a juxtaposing rhetoric of 'them' and 'us', this collection sadly confirms Pavlenko's (in press) claim that the proponents of super-diversity sustain their hegemonic expertise on the construction of difference. Difference which rests on homogenising, culturally essentialist understandings of two entities: a British majority and an ethnic minority which allegedly subscribe to incommensurate values, identities, practices and religious beliefs. The tone is set in Chapter 2 when Kershen asks in a rather ill-conceived way if 'we' ask too much of minority groups when demanding that they become part of the mainstream and by doing so subjugate their cultural identity. Vaugh (Chapter 3) sustains these divisions in her optimistic conclusion that tensions between the host and ethnic cultures can be played out smoothly in the vibrant ethnic marketplace – a neutral arena in which different worlds come to mingle and interact in a mutually enriching manner. White (Chapter 11) highlights concerns with ethnicity, culture and religion in an exploration of health inequality, and by focusing on the utilisation of healthcare services by Bangladeshis in East London starts with the assumption that health preoccupations, stigma attached to

disease, and alternative health beliefs and practices are somehow more relevant for patients in ethnic groups – thus implying a cultural clash between 'traditional' minority cultures and the 'rational' and modern British healthcare workforce. Yet Walter's (Chapter 8) reliance on ethnographic studies demonstrates how putting individuals into cultural and ethnic boxes often contradicts the realities on the ground as well as people's own interpretations and self-identification. Thus 'identity alliance' between young people of Irish and Caribbean origin, he argues, can be seen as an expression of solidarity and cooperation in a common struggle for political equality that overcomes what some want us to believe are insurmountable cultural differences. Another contestation of the reification of cultural and ethnic divisions is the interesting finding that proves the diversity of the Irish immigrant community, among which a great number of second-generation Irish describe their ethnic identity with the hybrid term 'London Irish'; yet, at the same time they have remained outsiders to mainstream British society and the migrant community. The foregrounding of cultural identities, and ethnic and religious differences, in this volume shifts the focus and silences the real social divisions marked by political and economic conflicts. The uncritical engagement with multicultural policies aimed at managing migration and the role of local authorities in creating fragmented and disempowered social groups is, however, not reflected in Michael Keating's contribution (Chapter 4). He provides us with the rather self-evident conclusion that local governments that possess a more substantial understanding of their local communities are better able to deliver adequate public services. It is hard to take at face value his praise of the success of three London boroughs in 'tackling issues of difference and change' given his reliance on government reports and commissioned academic research that silences the voices of the recipients of the services. Eade (Chapter 7), on the other hand, demonstrates the multiplicity of often conflicting voices of community leaders and local inhabitants who clash over authenticity of representation. In an exploration of cultural representations of minority groups, Eade traces the colonialist traditions

that have informed multicultural policies in their efforts to sustain the myth of the ‘homogeneous’ community and to ‘appoint’ local leaders as the ‘true’ voices of such communities.

Perhaps symptomatic of the stance of the collection is the fact that London, not the migrants themselves, is its main focus. Migrants and the diversity they bring are ‘part of the landscape’ as Kershen argues (p. 30), a part that is welcomed and celebrated as long as it is properly managed and demonstrates efforts to integrate. The policy agenda that the book follows and its efforts to de-contextualise and de-politicise migration is at its most obvious when the editor’s attitude towards individuals and their movements is voiced in such labels as ‘outsiders’ (p. 29) producing ‘tsunami’ (p. 227) and ‘influx’ – a good demonstration of the right-wing tropes that seem to populate some parts of liberal (multicultural) thought. It is Michal Garapich (Chapter 9) who gives a face and voice to the homogeneous masses in his ethnographic exploration of Polish migrants as political subjects whose everyday strategies of resistance have managed to challenge hegemonic state regulations and contribute to the development of a migration system between Poland and the UK. Garapich also dispels some of the misconceptions surrounding Eastern European and Polish migration in particular. Thus, while Kershen’s introduction recognises the contribution of Eastern European migrants to the changing migration face of London but constructs these movements as stemming from the recent EU accession of ten Eastern European countries – and therefore a phenomenon of the twenty-first century – Garapich’s contribution emphasises the continuity of current migrations with pre-2004 movements, and therefore as embedded in a general Polish migration culture. Further, the title of the collection begs an explanation of who regards London as a ‘promised land’ and what the exact promises are that constitute the attractiveness of the city. The reader will be surprised to find that an exploration requiring engagement with migrants’ imaginaries and perceptions is largely missing from the collection – except for Garapich’s account of Polish migrants’ visions of London as a post-national individualistic paradise.

The broadly celebratory tone of the collection, one that is characteristic of the super-diversity prism’s effort to sustain a sense of social romanticism and an illusion of equality in its search for cultural homogenisation, is contested by the contributions of several chapters. Tendayi Bloom’s (Chapter 5) critical exploration of the policies of destitution that produce vulnerability and marginalisation among refused asylum-seekers; Nair’s (Chapter 6) claim that London’s global economic supremacy is largely sustained through the enslavement of different groups of ‘irregular’ migrants; Latin American migrants’ negotiations between different states of visibility and invisibility (Chapter 10); and Anderson’s (Chapter 12) concerns with the profound health inequality that migrants suffer and their higher risk of HIV-related vulnerabilities, all present us with a different face of London, which makes the volume editor’s description of London as a ‘tolerant’ safe heaven offering religious and economic freedoms at best inaccurate and at worst naïve. In their critical perspective and the sensibility of their engagement, these chapters stand out as ill-integrated in the general prism of the volume, where the salient perspectives they offer are not substantially recognised.

In the concluding remarks of this book, Anne Kershen sensibly predicts that ‘London’s migrant landscape will not remain static; immigrants will continue to come and stay and come and go, ensuring that the capital’s migrant population will remain super-diverse’ (p. 229). Future research that engages with the diversity of migrant populations should focus on voicing the political and economic struggles of marginalised groups instead of concealing these beneath a veil of cultural and religious divisions. This book is definitely a step in the right direction, with its interesting theme, interdisciplinary line-up of contributors and pointed timeliness, but it is also a reminder of the long way there is still to go in building critical scholarship that is sensitive to migrants and their sufferings.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The editor references data on migration numbers to such secondary sources as The Times, The Daily Mail, The Economist and BBC Radio Four.

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**Brad K. Blitz (2014). *Migration and Freedom. Mobility, Citizenship and Exclusion*. Cheltenham (UK), Northampton, MA (USA): Edward Elgar, 256 pp.**

It has been a long-standing criticism of migration scholarship that despite the increasing interest in the topic, the phenomenon of international migration remains under-theorised (Davis 1988; Schmitter-Heisler 1992). Other major and still valid criticisms are also regularly raised in connection to such customarily adopted essentialising and unquestioned

distinctions as those between internal and international, or skilled and unskilled migration (Smith, Favell 2006). Brad K. Blitz’s *Migration and Freedom: Mobility, Citizenship and Exclusion* is a much-needed contribution to the scholarly literature addressing these deficiencies, providing a groundbreaking synthesis of legal scholarship, qualitative empirical analysis and social theorising.

At the core of the book lies the insight that one of the most promising approaches to migration theory today is via the concept of ‘freedom’ – and more specifically that of ‘freedom of movement’ – which can help overcome often unfruitful distinctions between types of migration, including that between ‘migration’ and ‘mobility’ as construed within the framework of the European Union (see Boswell, Geddes 2011). To briefly summarise the two fundamental distinctions: first, movements *across* international borders are conceptually and analytically distinguished from movements *within* national borders, the latter being ‘far more common’ and ‘subject to few or no restrictions’ in most countries (Boswell, Geddes 2011: 2); second, ‘international migration refers to movement from outside the EU by people who are not nationals of a member state’, while ‘EU mobility refers to nationals of EU member states – exercising their rights of free movement as EU citizens’ (Boswell and Geddes 2011: 3). In order to overcome the empirical limitations imposed by such distinctions, Blitz chooses to maintain the focus on ‘contemporary Europe’, as the region that has most strongly ‘committed itself to the principle of the free movement of people’ (p. 15), but at the same time expands the scope of his interrogation to free movement rights guaranteed both by EU law and by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This allows him to concentrate empirically on a variety of mechanisms that hinder freedom of movement in the national contexts of Spain, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia and Russia (which, while not an EU member state, has ratified Protocol 4 of the ECHR, Article 2 of which deals with ‘freedom of movement’), highlighting not only the ways in which some EU citizens see their rights curtailed, but how ‘the idea of free movement within states is also contested by the number of state-

sanctioned controls that apply in varying degrees to immigrants and domestic migrants, formal citizens and non-citizens and many categories in between' (pp. 8–9).

The book is organised into ten chapters, the first three offering historical, theoretical and legal overviews, followed by five case studies adapted from previously published journal articles, and closing with a thematic analysis of the selected cases and a brief conclusion. Following an introductory chapter in which the author presents a historical overview of the rights of foreigners, the changing idea of sovereignty, and the 'frontiers of inequality' associated with internal migration, Chapter 2 outlines the conceptual framework of the book. Blitz builds mainly on the theoretical arguments for free movement proposed by Hannah Arendt, John Rawls, Amartya Sen, Joseph Carens and Adam Hosein, alongside John Torpey's now classic examination of the historical development of state surveillance and control through the passport regime. A review of this vast literature leads the author to identify five 'central themes' that will inform his empirical examinations: first, the idea of freedom of movement as a foundational right and a condition for action; second, motivations for migration, considering that 'while migration is a decision, it is not necessarily a choice' (p. 35); third, the relationship between open borders and freedom of movement; fourth, the relationship between freedom of movement and democracy; and fifth, the role of the state in promoting free movement. These themes not only run through the discussion of case studies in the empirical chapters, but are also the building blocks of the ensuing *Analysis* chapter, where each case is briefly discussed anew in respect to all five themes.

Before turning to the case studies, Chapter 3 details the normative framework of free movement in the European Union. Here, Blitz does great service to social scientists less versed in the legal scholarship by guiding the reader through the relevant treaties and case-law developments, showing how the right to free movement has expanded since the 1956 *Spaak Report*. While in such an evolving legal environment a definitive account is hardly achievable, the chapter offers safe pointers for anyone wishing to normatively ground their investigations on the subject.

The following chapters analyse the empirical material, which is the result of a decade-long research in five different countries, and amounts to over 160 qualitative interviews and focus groups. First, the author turns to the case of *Spanish doctors in the United Kingdom* (Chapter 4), discussing how medical professionals from Spain were recruited and relocated to a specific region in the North-East of England. As he finds, there was no single factor determining this seemingly successful case of free movement, but a combination of special directives, bilateral agreements, the direct involvement and support provided by the UK Department of Health, and not negligibly, the personal commitment of a few doctors who had previously arrived in the region. The greatest empirical challenge to the idea of freedom of movement raised by this study derives from the finding that behind the surface impression of a case involving free-moving professionals, the interviews speak of different forms of structural coercion behind migration decisions, and the difficulties doctors face in returning to their country and being reincorporated into the Spanish medical system.

Chapter 5 retains the focus on professionals, looking at the experiences of non-Italian foreign language teachers in Italy – the *lettori* – who have been exposed to one of the most startling cases of institutionalised nationality-based discrimination in a founding member state of the EU. In describing the plight of the *lettori*, the author navigates us through the regulation of foreign language teaching at Italian universities since the early 1980s, court cases that have repeatedly identified serious shortcomings on the part of university employers, and the personal narratives of affected teachers. The main point emerging from the chapter is that freedom of movement within the EU means rather little if not in conjunction with the associated rights to equal treatment and protection from discrimination based on nationality.

The following three chapters further complicate the empirical reality of freedom of movement. The case of displaced Serbs in Croatia (Chapter 6) highlights the limitations of citizenship in the face of ethnic discrimination, contrasting the successful integration of Bosnian Croats with the exclusion of ethnic Serb post-war returnees to the now newest EU

member state. In Chapter 7 Blitz explores how residency policies have created barriers for internal movers in Russia to successfully and safely establish themselves in the capital city. This case is probably the clearest example of how freedom of movement can become effectively restricted even without any nationality or ethnic factors, and despite international law and constitutional provisions. The author also reminds the reader that outside the European legal space such and similar limitations to internal mobility are less extraordinary than it is often presumed in the migration literature.

The final empirical chapter discusses what Blitz describes as ‘possibly the most disturbing’ case of limiting freedom of movement, in the context of post-communist Slovenia. There, a great number of non-ethnic Slovenian previous residents have seen their citizenship revoked, being practically ‘erased’ from the State Register, a measure leading to serious violations of civil, political, economic and social rights. Similarly to the Croatian case, the chapter presents how ethno-nationalist considerations can curtail the right to freedom of movement for groups of people who had been previously protected by citizenship, and how this process can take place against the backdrop of EU integration.

The seemingly eclectic cases which Blitz analyses fuse remarkably well in addressing the five theoretically derived themes he proposes, and the *Analysis* chapter is meant to highlight these connection points. On the flip-side, this approach can feel repetitive at times, and since the contribution of each case study to the different themes is less balanced, a more integrative discussion could have benefited the chapter.

Readers of *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* will further notice how the cases they are most familiar with, while escaping the geographical focus of the book, raise very similar issues and could be read along similar lines of inquiry. The main contribution of the book is therefore theoretical and conceptual, above all in directing our attention to the connection between migration and freedom, and setting up an analytical framework which is worth pursuing further both empirically and through a richer conceptualisation of freedom of movement. In this

respect, one of the most valuable insights of the book is that there is (or rather should be) a distinction between ‘freedom of movement’ and ‘open border’ arguments, the latter following too strictly the logic of classical push-pull migration models, and disregarding the social factors that influence mobility. As Blitz concludes, ‘if the concept of freedom of movement is to have any meaning, then the idea should be reconnected to the logic of personal freedom and the connection made between the rights to migration, settlement and establishment’ (p. 191).

Overall, *Migration and Freedom* opens up new avenues not only for further research, but also for the reinterpretation of the already amassed empirical material on human mobility, and as such it is an important read for migration researchers in any discipline, especially those focusing on the European Union. For scholars preoccupied with migration in Central and Eastern Europe, taking inspiration from the book and relating their observations to the concept of freedom of movement is not so much a challenge as a necessity.

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