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ISSN 2300-1682

Editorial office: Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw, Pasteura 7, 02-093 Warsaw, e-mail: ceemr@uw.edu.pl

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Bohemia's Antipodes: Post-Communist Czech Migration to New Zealand

Oksana Opara*

In the post-communist era, the European migration space changed significantly. It has become characterised predominantly by temporary labour migration and new forms of circular, return and onward migration which are collectively theorised as 'liquid'. The 2004/2007 eastward expansion of the EU resulted in the re-emergence of large-scale East-West intra-EU migration; however, Czechia continues to have one of the lowest levels of emigration among EU member-states in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). This article analyses Czech migration to New Zealand, which constitutes a considerable portion of overall Czech emigration. It is hypothesised that this flow can be understood as an example of 'liquid' migration beyond the EU to a distant settler society. Data from Immigration New Zealand and Stats NZ are examined to identify the trends, patterns and sociodemographic profile of Czech-to-New Zealand migration; other secondary sources provide a preliminary sketch of the motivations behind (and lived experiences of) Czech migrants in New Zealand. The study finds that this migration is increasing – mostly for temporary work, holidaying or visiting friends and relatives – and one of the largest, youngest and most recently arrived migrant groups from the CEE EU-10 countries. It is concluded that Czechia's comparatively high standard of living may be an explanatory factor behind the relatively large flow of its people to New Zealand and that further qualitative investigation is needed to elucidate the motivations and diverse experiences of individual Czech migrants. The article ultimately contributes to comparative migration studies by exploring a potentially unique case of liquid migration to a traditional settler society.

Keywords: Czechia; international migration; New Zealand; post-communist migration; liquid migration

Introduction

Countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have had an important impact on broader European migration flows since at least the early 1990s, when major political and socioeconomic changes transformed the region, including the nature of its human mobility. Scholarly discourse and theoretical approaches have accordingly

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responded to these changes. Most migration literature on this topic has focused on intra-EU migration or the movement of EU nationals to major destinations like the United States and the United Kingdom but CEE migration to newer, under-studied destinations can still reward our critical attention.

One of these under-studied CEE migration flows has been from the Czech Republic (henceforth *Czechia*) to New Zealand, which was chosen as the focus of this study because there is a relatively large number of educated and skilled young adult Czech nationals moving to New Zealand on both a temporary and a permanent basis. The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs recognises that New Zealand has, since the 1990s, ‘become a popular destination for emigrants’, including skilled individuals, while also noting the importance of the United Kingdom and Ireland, Australia (as a destination for Czech students) and the United States (as a hub of both legal and illegal labour opportunities) (Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010). According to the OECD (2017: 180), 3 900 Czechs reportedly emigrated in 2015 and New Zealand migration statistics data suggest that almost one fifth (18 per cent) of those emigrants went to New Zealand: 694 Czechs were recorded as arriving to New Zealand in the same year, intending to stay for at least 12 months. This is despite research showing that Czechia has not been a ‘significant emigration country’ (Drbohlav, Lachmanová-Medová, Čermák, Janská, Čermáková and Dzúrová 2009: 21) since 1989 and while the 2004 eastward enlargement of the EU spurred significant East-West migration – mainly from Poland, Romania and Bulgaria – there has been ‘no significant rise in emigration’ from Czechia (Fassman, Kohlbacher and Reeger 2014: 44). The relatively high rate of Czechia-New Zealand migration indeed warrants scholarly investigation, considering that Czech nationals have, overall, remarkably low intentions of moving abroad compared with other CEE countries (Di Cara 2016; European Commission 2010). Górný (2017) has emphasised that the role of non-EU emigration destinations has diminished for CEE EU countries such as Czechia and that emigration from there will continue to take place mainly within the Union in documented, long-term form. However, this article hypothesises that the new ‘liquid’ form of post-EU-accession migration in the twenty-first century – which is typically temporary, labour-driven and unpredictable – extends globally to important non-EU destinations (as discussed by Black, Engbersen, Okólski and Panțîru 2010: 43), for which the steadily increasing migration of Czechs to New Zealand is an insightful case study.

The article begins by overviewing Europe’s changing migration landscape over the last four decades and introducing the theoretical approaches that have been developed in response, with emphasis on research by Engbersen and Snel (2013), King (2018) and others around the concept of ‘liquid’ migration. New Zealand’s immigration policy framework is then discussed, including post-1986 legislative changes that altered the type and composition of migration to New Zealand. Post-communist migration from Czechia to New Zealand is subsequently described and analysed comparatively in relation to other CEE-New Zealand flows, using migration statistics collected by Stats NZ, data on visa and permits approval from Immigration New Zealand and census data. New Zealand media sources are also considered to provide a preliminary sketch of the motivations behind, and lived experiences of, Czech migrants in New Zealand, in lieu of richer qualitative investigation. The article ultimately seeks to highlight the potentially unique case of Czech migration to New Zealand and to offer some theoretical insights for the study of Central and Eastern European migrants’ movement to non-EU destinations in general, which may support future qualitative research on their experiences of temporary labour migration and settlement in New Zealand as well as other traditional settler countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia.

Historical and theoretical background

The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the end of the Cold War, which had dramatic consequences for CEE countries in all spheres of life. Many political, institutional and economic reforms were implemented and citizens regained the freedom to travel internationally after more than four decades of isolation behind the Iron Curtain. Western Europeans tended to meet this new freedom of travel with anxiety: public opinion and some politicians showed concern about potential mass migration from the East flooding into the ‘old’ Europe. However, these fears have not materialised and the strongly anticipated East-West exodus did not occur during the 1990s (Okólski 2012; Wallace 2002).

Instead, since the 1990s, migration has become more globalised, accelerated in growth, diversified in its flows (King 2018: 1; Vertovec 2007). The migration regimes and systems of CEE countries have accordingly transformed: from transition destinations of illegal migration to the West to forming a ‘buffer’ zone at the gates of ‘Fortress Europe’ (Drbohlav 2012; Drbohlav and Janská 2009). By the turn of the new millennium, economic and social polarisation within CEE produced new intra-regional movements. Czechia became a country predominantly of immigration along with several other CEE countries such as Hungary (and much more recently, Poland) owing in part to its relatively high demand for foreign labour and relatively high standards of living, political stability and democratic development – not to mention its cultural and linguistic proximity to and shared socialist history with nearby countries (Drbohlav *et al.* 2009; Okólski 2012; Wallace 2002; Wallace and Palyanitsa 1995). Reflecting these changes, a 1998 survey (IOM cited in Wallace 2002: 605) of CEE nationals’ migration intentions by the International Organisation for Migration indicated that about half of Czech respondents were interested in temporary labour migration; however, only 11 per cent of Czechs reported wanting to emigrate permanently. According to the 2005 Eurobarometer survey (European Foundation of the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 2006 cited in Duszczuk and Matuszczyk 2014: 25), just 1.2 per cent of Czech respondents expected to move to another EU country in the following five years, the lowest level of migration intentions out of the 8 CEE countries that joined the EU in 2004 – although, in 2012, 94 per cent of Czech respondents were aware ‘that they had the right to migrate and live freely in another EU member state’ (Duszczuk and Matuszczyk 2014: 25). The situation has remained largely similar since the eastward enlargement of the EU in 2004, which saw 10 countries, including Czechia, Poland and Hungary, accessioned into the union. OECD data indicate that Czechia has the lowest number of nationals emigrating to other EU destinations than any other CEE EU-10 country (OECD 2007).

This new chapter in the history of intra-EU migration has spurred new forms of short-term and non-linear types of temporary labour migration (Black *et al.* 2010; Glorius, Grabowska-Lusińska and Kuvik 2013; Okólski 2007; Triandafyllidou 2013). Engbersen and Snel (2013) theorise these new forms of migration collectively as ‘liquid’. The metaphorical term builds on Bauman’s study *Liquid Modernity* (2000), which proposes that, in the globalised era of the twenty-first century, the ‘erstwhile “solidity” of fixed notions such as social class, stable families, cohesive neighbourhoods, and the nation-state has been replaced by societies which are, in many respects, fluid, flexible, and under constant change’ (King 2018: 5). In this context, migration is no longer primarily comprised of one-way flows from sending to receiving countries, where the final sign of success is assimilation with the host society and returning home or attempting to re-settle elsewhere is regarded as failure (Goździak and Pawlak 2016). Owing to the increased global demand for skilled and temporary labour and increasingly affordable global travel and communication, migrants engage in more flexible forms of movement that are often temporary and characterised by a ‘deliberate stance of keeping options open’ (King 2018: 6).

Liquid migration tends to be motivated by migrants’ labour needs rather than family obligations, reflecting people’s increasing tendency to raise children and marry later in life (Engbersen and Snel 2013: 34). Some

migrants may only stay abroad to work for short periods, move ‘to several different countries in short successions’, or adapt to Europe’s fluctuating labour markets by alternating circularly between their home country and diverse destinations, which in some cases resembles ‘transnational commuting’ (Goździak and Pawlak 2016: 109) or ‘incomplete migration’ (Okólski 2001). A consequence of these diverse flows is that the concept of temporary ‘anchoring’ becomes an important means of capturing the essence of migrants’ ‘drifting lives’, ‘complex identities’ and ‘mechanisms of settling down in terms of searching for relative stability rather than putting down roots’ (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Brzozowska 2017: 1; see also Grzymała-Kazłowska 2017). Migrants can also continue to work temporarily in other destinations (onward migration) and experience ‘multiple returns’ home to such an extent that national borders have lost much of their former significance (Goździak and Pawlak 2016: 109; Engbersen and Snel 2013: 31).

Together, these factors underline the pluralised and individualised character of liquid migration. Migrants must regularly adapt to diverse contexts and events as best suits their personal circumstances in attempt to ‘take advantage of economic and lifestyle opportunities in a widening cognitive and geopolitical space of free movement’ (King 2018: 5). However, not everyone can securely take advantage of such opportunities since, for many temporary labour migrants, life in the destination country may be about ‘pure survival, living on low wages, and doing tough jobs in degrading conditions’ in which employers may unfairly enforce asymmetrical contracts and abuse the limited rights of their migrant employees (King 2018: 2). The corresponding ‘survival strategies’ of liquid migrants in destination countries can include self-employment, informal jobs and forms of family support and even crime, in contrast to the formal employment, social security and permanent residence permits characteristically held by migrants of the ‘old’ (pre-1990) migration era (Engbersen and Snel 2013: 30). Some scholars (Favell 2008; Moreh 2014) warn that new liquid migration flows may result in an exploitative dual labour market for CEE migrants working in the West, and that there may be tension between ideals of free movement within the expanded EU and economic and racial discrimination (which has arguably already been manifested in the wake of the 2015–16 refugee crisis).

Overall, earlier forms of European migration – such as the twentieth-century regimes of guest-workers and, more recently, seasonal agricultural worker flows – have not entirely disappeared and it is questionable to what extent the so-called era of liquid migration is new (Engbersen and Snel 2013: 24; King 2018: 5). Nevertheless, it is clear that the early 1990s marked the dawn of profound changes for migration in Europe. These changes have unfolded over the last three decades to form a complex system in which migrants – especially skilled professionals, international students, refugees and labour migrants – engage in temporary and circular flows of an open-ended or liquid character, in turn challenging established twentieth-century European notions of welfare, citizenship, work and national identity.

One implication of liquid migration for scholars and policy-makers is that such migrants do not register in official statistics (Engbersen 2012: 98), thus creating ‘manifest shortages’ of data on emigration from CEE countries following the EU’s 2004 eastward enlargement (Grabowska-Lusińska, 2013: 41; Stats NZ n.d. b, c). This contributes to liquid migration’s formal ‘invisibility’ and leads to ‘gaps in our knowledge of the stocks and flows of post-accession migrants’ (Grabowska-Lusińska 2013: 43). The issue also applies to liquid migration beyond the EU to settler societies such as the United States, Canada and less-usual destinations such as New Zealand, although migration scholars have so far mostly paid attention only to liquid migration in a European context and at a macro level (using statistics to consider flows at a large scale). A limited number of researchers have addressed the complexities of liquid migration in terms of ‘individuals, families, households, and localities, including the family and community members left behind’ (Black *et al.* 2010: 43; Goździak and Pawlak 2016: 110) but, as Hugo (2011: 11) discusses, ‘our understanding of the impacts of migration remains biased toward (...) permanent settlement’. Although some progress has been made, there also remains a lack of studies ‘on the migratory trends of the Czech population’ in general (Di Cara 2016: 188; see also Pařízková

2011). This article seeks to partly address the problem by presenting a destination-focused study of post-communist Czech migration to New Zealand, including some qualitative stories from media and government sources to lend the analysis a human face.

Data context and sources

New Zealand migration policy evolution

Throughout New Zealand's history, migration has been heavily controlled and regulated. For example, European migrants from Great Britain and Ireland were assisted and supported to varying degrees until 1975, while significant restrictions remained in place for Chinese and Asian migration (Beaglehole 2015; NZ Parliamentary Library 2008). In the 1980s, neo-liberal economic and social restructuring was undertaken, including radical reform of the country's immigration policy (NZ Department of Labour, Immigration Division 1986; Lidgard, Bedford and Goodwin 1998). The immigration Policy Review of 1986 shifted the focus of criteria for admitting migrants into New Zealand from ethnic origin and nationality (the traditional source-country preference system) to individual skills, work experience, educational level and age (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard 2001). Since 1991, the system has awarded points to potential migrants during the entry process relative to their 'score' for these criteria (Bedford *et al.* 2001). As a result, new and increasingly closer migration ties have become established between New Zealand and many different countries, particularly India and China as well as CEE countries (Bedford 2000; Castles 1998; Ip 2003). Collectively, these reforms increased the ethnic heterogeneity and pluralisation of migration flows to New Zealand and contributed to the resulting 'super-diversity' of the population (Spoonley 2001, 2015; Stats NZ 2013; Vertovec 2007). The country's immigration policy framework has continued to be adjusted in response to labour market demands and to more recent public concerns over the pressure of historically high net immigration on infrastructure, healthcare and housing (Hall 2017; Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment 2018).

A longitudinal government-sponsored study found that 'a positive link [exists] between migrants having work experience in New Zealand before residence and their employment outcomes after gaining residence' (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment 2016: 28). There is now a pathway for both workers and students to progress from temporary migration to New Zealand residency (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment 2016). The system favours migrants already in the country, either because they already have a temporary work permit or because they have completed their studies in New Zealand (OECD 2014). Since the mid-1990s, at least 50 countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States and European Union countries – including Czechia – have been part of a visa waiver scheme, whereby nationals from the participating countries are not required to obtain a visitor visa to enter New Zealand if they are visiting for three months or less (Immigration New Zealand 2017b). When already in the country, migrants can extend their visitor permit up to nine months or apply for a different type of visa without having to leave the country (Immigration New Zealand 2017b). In 2011, following the introduction of the Immigration Act 2009, a new interim visa system was brought into effect, allowing temporary migrants already in the country to lawfully remain for up to six months or until another visa was approved, during which time the rights of the original visa were maintained, thus enabling further study, work or travel.

Thus, over the last two decades, the number of temporary work visas granted annually has increased by 600 per cent from approximately 30 000 to almost 200 000 (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment 2016). More than half of all migrants who have been granted residency held an essential-skills temporary work visa at some stage before becoming residents (OECD 2014). Approximately 80 per cent of the 52 052 people

who were granted residency in the 2015/2016 financial year (from July to the end of June) had previously held a temporary visa (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment 2016: 28). Temporary labour migrants now constitute approximately 3.6 per cent of New Zealand's labour force, the highest proportion among the OECD countries (OECD 2014). After reviewing New Zealand's labour migration policy in 2014, the OECD (2014: 13) reported that 'permanent migration mainly draws from the pool of temporary labour migrants'. Despite New Zealand being predominantly a settlement country, its immigration system has been reoriented to favour temporariness, both responding to and shaping new forms of liquid migration in the Asia-Pacific region.

Thus, the blurred boundary between temporary stays and permanent settlement in New Zealand's immigration system aligns with the hallmarks of liquid migration (Spoonley and Bedford 2012; Trlin and Spoonley 1997; Trlin, Spoonley and Watts 2005). In this regard, New Zealand is not alone: similar reorientations toward temporariness and liquidity have occurred in the immigration systems of other traditional settler societies over the past two decades and, by 2014, 'Australian, Canadian and New Zealand strategies had converged to a remarkable degree' (Hawthorne 2014: 1). In Australia in particular, migration policy has shifted 'away from a longstanding policy to eschew temporary migration to one involving a range of visa categories designed to attract temporary residents to work in Australia' (Hugo 2011: 11).

Data sources for analysis and discussion

Administrative data from Immigration New Zealand and Stats NZ (formerly known as Statistics New Zealand) are used in this study. Since April 1921, migration statistics produced by Stats NZ are based on information derived from travellers' arrival and departure cards, on which travellers self-report either their intended time away from New Zealand or the time they intend to spend in the country. Migrants are considered long-term migrants if they report their intention to stay in New Zealand for twelve months or longer. The cards and included questions have changed over time but this method of data collection regarding migrations flows is still used today (Stats NZ n.d. b).

New Zealand's international migration data are based on people's self-reported intentions rather than on their actual movement and changing migrant statuses – which poses problems to both migration researchers and policy-makers. The potential for inaccuracy is compounded by the possibility that intentions may not be realised. Current migration policy allows migrants to apply for a change in their visa status onshore in New Zealand (OECD 2014). A migrant intending to complete only a three-month visit may, for example, become a long-term resident; alternatively, someone who arrives intending to stay in New Zealand long-term may leave due to a change in circumstances. To accurately measure migration flows, Stats NZ recently developed a '12–16-month rule' (discussed in Stats NZ 2017) which allows migrant statuses (long-term or short-term) to be defined based on their travel histories. This new method of measuring the contribution of international migration flows to the changing structure and composition of New Zealand's resident population uses a combination of border movement data and associated movement and passenger identities, to produce a historical series of estimated migrant arrivals and departures. The application of the 12–16-month rule could produce longitudinal data that enable more nuanced analysis of liquid migration flows, including circular, return and step-migration (Stats NZ 2017) and other patterns of post-accession migration to New Zealand.

Immigration New Zealand records form another important source of data on migration to the country, in terms of the number of visas granted across all categories (Immigration New Zealand n.d. a). However, interpretation of these data may be complicated because some people who were granted a visa or permit overseas may never actually arrive in New Zealand. Nevertheless, Immigration New Zealand collected and published data about whether an arrival has been recorded for a granted permit/visa, which does enable a more accurate

assessment of the composition of migrant flows (Immigration New Zealand n.d. a). Despite these limitations, the arrival/departure border information and Immigration New Zealand statistics mean that, as in Australia, important characteristics of both liquid and traditional migration forms can be examined and understood (Hugo 2011: 2).

Results: post-communist migration flows from Czechia to New Zealand, 1989–2017

Bohemian history, identity, and tradition

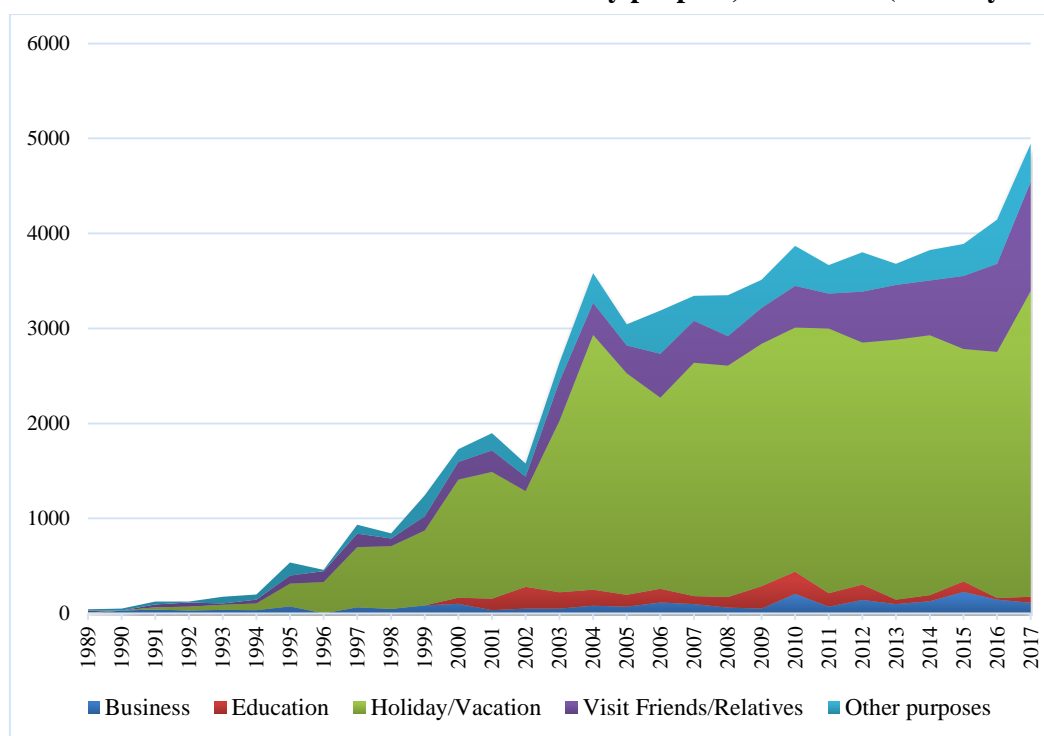
During the nineteenth century and until World War I, the United States and Canada were the major destinations of emigration from the now-Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia (Dragostinova and Gerlach 2017; Kukral 2004; Zeitlhofer 2011). The first Bohemians and Moravians to arrive in New Zealand did so in the 1860s via Australia and Tahiti (Lochore 1951: 69; McGill 1982: 73). On 27 June 1863, a group of 81 Bohemians arrived in New Zealand after a four-month journey from Staab (today Stod) about 25 km west of Pilsen (Plzen); they were offered land in the small town of Puhoi, north of what is now the country's largest city, Auckland (Procházková 2010: 21). This Bohemian settlement in Puhoi has been studied as an enclave community aiming to preserve its Bohemian traditions.¹ The original 81 migrants identified themselves as 'Bohemians', although their actual ethnicity – and whether they can be considered Czech migrants – remains unclear. The Puhoi village is a popular destination for visitors from Czechia and Germany, reflecting Bohemia's long and complex historical ties with its neighbouring regions. Procházková (2010: 21, 28) discusses the history of nineteenth-century Bohemians in New Zealand and the state of their community today, noting a need to understand how the settlers identified themselves rather than how they were perceived by others:

The Germans and the Czechs meet in Puhoi's church, which often creates a paradoxical situation when both groups point to 'their' surnames on the walls and both think of Puhoi as 'their' village. None of them are fully right, as the category 'Bohemians' originally included people of both German and Czech descent, speaking a German dialect, who identified with a region where they came from, not with German or Czech nationality.

As highlighted by Dragostinova and Gerlach (2017), issues of ethnic identity among CEE peoples have been complex since at least the nineteenth century. The situation has been shaped significantly by the “mixing” of various ethno-linguistic and religious communities in the period of empires to “unmixing” after the triumph of the nation-state’ (Dragostinova and Gerlach 2017: 127).

Temporary and permanent migrant flows from Czechia to New Zealand

Since 1989, the number of Czech visitor arrivals has been steadily growing, from 42 arrivals in 1989 to nearly 5 000 (4 944) in 2017, as shown in Figure 1. This flow exceeds that from any other EU-10 country in the last 15 years, as Table 1 indicates. Czech migrants in this period make up 32.3 per cent of all CEE EU-10 visitor arrivals, followed by Poland (whose share of the flows is 25.7 per cent) and Hungary (11.2 per cent). Together, these three countries account for over two-thirds (69.2 per cent) of visitor arrivals from the CEE EU-10 countries.

Figure 1. Visitor arrivals in New Zealand from Czechia by purpose, 1989–2017 (March years)

Note: Data for years 1989–1993 refer to Czechoslovakia.

Source: INFOS database, Stats NZ, <http://www.stats.govt.nz/infoshare>.

Table 1. Visitor arrivals by purpose, CEE EU-10 nationals, 2003–2018

Country	Business		Education		Holiday/ Vacation		Visit Friends/ Relatives		Other		Total, all purposes	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Czechia	1 773	17.2	1 948	46.5	41 018	34.7	9 236	31.8	5 527	24.7	59 502	32.3
Poland	4 387	42.4	535	12.8	30 934	26.2	5 574	19.2	5 900	26.3	47 330	25.7
Hungary	1 150	11.1	512	12.2	12 419	10.5	4 309	14.8	2 246	10.0	20 636	11.2
Romania	846	8.2	177	4.2	5254	4.4	3 471	12.0	2 718	12.1	12 466	6.8
Slovakia	345	3.3	477	11.4	8 120	6.9	1 814	6.2	1 275	5.7	12 031	6.5
Slovenia	296	2.9	84	2.0	7 541	6.4	1 365	4.7	1 246	5.6	10 897	5.9
Bulgaria	821	7.9	85	2.0	2 719	2.3	1 388	4.8	1 287	5.7	6 300	3.4
Estonia	206	2.0	148	3.5	4 302	3.6	756	2.6	809	3.6	6 221	3.4
Latvia	194	1.9	138	3.3	2 853	2.4	725	2.5	705	3.1	4 615	2.5
Lithuania	318	3.1	86	2.0	2 909	2.5	377	1.3	689	3.1	4 379	2.3
Total	10 336	100.0	4 190	100.0	118 069	100.0	29 015	100.0	22 402	100.0	184 377	100.0

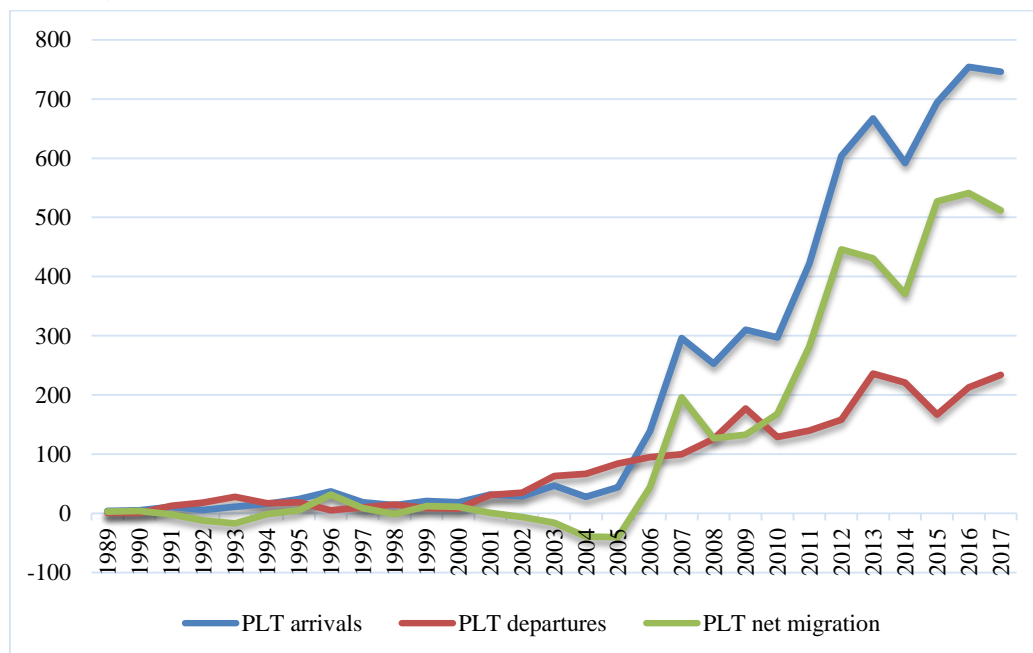
Source: Stats NZ (n.d. c). Author's calculations; March years.

Figure 1 highlights that the predominant purpose of visiting New Zealand among Czech migrants has been for a holiday/vacation followed by visiting friends/relatives, which is also the case for migrants from the other CEE EU-10 countries, as observed in Table 1. Visitor numbers from Czechia for business purposes have been

increasing but remain small. The number visiting for education has also been extremely limited from all the CEE EU-10 countries: 1 948 Czech visitors arrived for education in the observed period, contributing the largest share (46.5 per cent) of the total flow for education. Czechia contributes the largest flow across all categories except business, for which the largest number of arrivals over the observed period was from Poland at 4 837 arrivals, representing 42 per cent of the overall CEE EU-10 visitor flow for business.

Permanent and long-term (PLT) arrival data reflect the number of people who arrive with the intention to stay in New Zealand for at least 12 months. Overall, PLT arrivals and net migration from Czechia have been lower than visitor arrivals. As the data in Figure 2 indicate, during the 1990s, annual PLT net migration was below 100 and, between 2002 and 2005, was negative, reaching –40 in 2005. Following Czechia's accession to the EU, and after a moderate decrease in PLT arrivals and PLT net migration in 2008–2009, PLT migration began steadily increasing, reaching 694 arrivals in 2015 and 746 in 2017. Some Czech migrants may have returned home in anticipation of the country's EU accession but PLT arrivals and PLT net migration also started to increase in 2007, when Czechia joined the EU's Schengen agreement and Czech nationals obtained full freedom of intra-EU travel. The decrease of Czech PLT arrivals during 2008–2009 was most probably due to the global financial crisis. Table 2 indicates that, overall, PLT migration from the CEE EU-10 countries has increased over the last 15 years and that Czechia contributes the largest share (53.8 per cent) while from most other CEE countries, the annual PLT flow has been below 100. The PLT flow of Romanians has been high (15.0 per cent); however, this flow reached its peak in the period 2002–2007 with annual arrivals of, on average, 179 people and has declined steadily since Romania's accession to the EU in 2007.

Figure 2. PLT migration to New Zealand from Czechia 1989–2017 (March years)



Note: Data for years 1989–1993 refer to Czechoslovakia.

Source: INFOS database, Stats NZ, <http://www.stats.govt.nz/infoshare>.

Table 2. PLT arrivals, departures and net PLT migration of the CEE countries' nationals to New Zealand, 2003–2018

Nationality	Arrivals	In %	Departures	In %	Net PLT migration	In %
Czechia	6 619	53.2	2 578	52.4	4 041	53.8
Romania	1 515	12.2	389	7.9	1 126	15.0
Poland	948	7.6	451	9.2	497	6.6
Hungary	942	7.6	621	12.6	321	4.3
Bulgaria	457	3.7	137	2.9	320	4.3
Slovenia	454	3.7	158	3.2	296	3.9
Estonia	401	3.2	127	2.6	274	3.6
Lithuania	397	3.2	139	2.8	258	3.4
Slovakia	525	4.2	278	5.6	247	3.3
Latvia	176	1.4	38	0.8	138	1.8
Total	12 434	100.0	4 916	100.0	7 518	100.0

Notes: Sorted descending by net migration.

Source: Stats NZ (n.d. c). Author's calculations; March years.

Temporary working visa and residency visa approvals

Immigration New Zealand data on the number of applications approved for temporary working visas and residency visas are presented in Table 3. In the last two decades, the number of temporary working visas approved for CEE EU-10 migrants in New Zealand has increased more than five-fold – from 741 in 1998 to 4 042 in 2018 – and by 2.4 times for residency visa approvals in the same period. Of the 69 537 visas approved, 86.4 per cent have been in the temporary work category.

Most Czech migrants appear to obtain temporary working visas rather than residency visas. Of the 30 469 visas approved for Czechs in the last 20 years, 94.7 per cent – 28 848 in total – were for temporary work, constituting 48 per cent of all approvals for CEE EU-10 migrants in the observed period. Between 1998 and 2004, the flow of temporary working migrants from the CEE EU-10 countries was dominated by Polish migrants, fluctuating between 500 and 600 approvals per year, followed by Czechia, Romania and Hungary. Of the total 28 848 Czech approvals, 96 per cent had their temporary working visas approved during the 2004–2018 period.

Considering residency visas, the largest number was for migrants from Romania, who make up 30.6 per cent of the total residency visas approved for CEE EU-10 migrants in the 1998–2018 period and 24.5 per cent of approvals during 2004–2018. Czech migrants' approvals have accelerated since 1997, representing 20.4 per cent of approvals since 2004 and 17.1 per cent of approvals for the whole period. More than half (50.2 per cent) of residency visas approved in the period were for nationals of the Visegrad group countries: Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

The smallest share of temporary working visas in the same period was awarded to migrants from the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and Bulgaria, who gained 10 per cent of total CEE EU-10 approvals. The Baltic States and Slovenia had the lowest share of the residency visas granted at 8.7 per cent of the total.

As shown in Table 4, Czech migration flows to New Zealand are mostly labour driven, with the number of applications for temporary working visas exceeding those for residency over the last ten years by more than 19 times. Migrants can apply for diverse temporary working visa categories but most migrants, including those

from the CEE EU-10 countries, acquire visas in the Working Holiday Scheme (WHS), skilled work and relationship categories. For example, almost two-thirds (62.3 per cent) of temporary work visas approved for Czech migrants in the last ten years have been through the WHS, followed by the categories ‘other’, skilled work and relationship. The WHS is by far the largest category of temporary labour migration in New Zealand. It was established via a bilateral agreement between New Zealand and Japan in 1985 and now includes 45 countries following more recent expansion. The scheme allows young adults to holiday as well as to work and study in the country while honouring a reciprocal agreement between their home country and New Zealand. The total number of migrants who can participate in the WHS is unlimited for OECD countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, France and the United States, which constituted the main share (80 per cent) of the 500 798 total WHS participants in 2008–2018 (Opara 2018). A WHS agreement was established with Czechia in 2004 allowing a limited number of participants – which increased from an initial limit of 100 to 1 200 and was even exceeded in some years (Immigration New Zealand 2017a). OECD countries with limited agreements include all the CEE EU-10 member-states except Romania and Bulgaria, and include other non-EU countries such as Chile, Spain, Israel and South Korea. Czechia had 12 618 participants in the period 2008–2018, second only to South Korea’s 20 627 participants in 2007–2017 (Opara 2018: 39).

Residency visas granted in the last ten years to CEE EU-10 migrants have mostly been through the skilled migrant and partnership categories – for example, 89 per cent of Czech residency visa approvals in 2008–2018 were under these categories. Data on residence visa approvals for the period July 2006–July 2017 indicate that, of 417 residency visas granted to principal Czech applicants in the partnership category, 77.7 per cent (324) were to females, while 80.4 per cent of the 332 visas in the skilled migrant category went to males (Immigration New Zealand n.d. a). From 2008 to 2018, the partnership and skilled migrant categories made up 85.6 per cent and 76.9 per cent of residency visa approvals for Hungary and Romania respectively. Only Estonia’s residency visa approvals were dominated by the partnership category rather than skilled migrants and, of the three Baltic states, Latvia had the highest overall number of residency approvals.

Of the 4 549 residency visas approved for CEE EU-10 nationals since 2008, just 20 migrants from Czechia have been granted residency in the refugee category. Total approvals in the child, sibling and parent categories have been very low. In 2015/2016, the median age of Czech nationals granted residency as skilled migrants was 29 – with over half (57 per cent) aged 20–29 – and 36 per cent constituted the age group 30–39 years (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment 2016). The average size of resident applications measured as people per application varied between 1.0 and 1.9 in the period 1997/98 to 2015/16 for Czechia and was 1.3 in 2015/2016. Most applicants were, therefore, likely to be either young adult individuals without partners or young adult couples without children.

Table 3. Temporary work and residency visas approved by nationality, CEE EU-10 countries, 1998–2018 (end of June years)

Nationality	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total	Total %
Temporary work visas																							
Czechia	22	55	145	290	325	329	1 023	685	1 693	2 159	867	1 675	1 674	1 660	2 131	2 351	2 080	2 155	2 227	2 131	2 171	28 848	48.0
Poland	511	579	606	576	550	579	575	595	499	661	516	349	343	301	303	312	355	359	403	410	429	9 811	16.3
Hungary	36	49	30	55	149	329	444	373	422	589	502	440	292	290	197	327	382	325	308	329	327	6 195	10.3
Romania	17	18	38	92	294	384	360	404	383	316	293	287	219	202	175	181	169	170	156	116	109	4 383	7.3
Slovakia	12	28	23	73	56	56	99	85	172	240	184	137	119	96	161	184	212	233	244	228	214	2 856	4.8
Slovenia	10	14	26	11	16	28	50	49	51	67	60	58	110	155	155	153	185	179	186	177	205	1 945	3.2
Estonia	71		2	2	3	6	29	14	27	32	61	78	91	125	143	210	176	165	187	203	182	1 807	3.0
Latvia	6	8	13	20	23	23	43	31	66	59	58	63	118	95	94	96	124	190	189	174	185	1 678	2.8
Bulgaria	53	38	37	58	59	66	80	108	109	119	121	109	76	78	76	75	82	98	75	71	52	1 640	2.7
Lithuania	3	10	11	18	28	20	20	28	30	36	44	34	28	48	36	41	55	54	36	151	168	899	1.5
Total EU-10	741	799	931	1 195	1 503	1 820	2 723	2 372	3 452	4 278	2 706	3 230	3 070	3 050	3 471	3 930	3 820	3 928	4 011	3 990	4 042	60 062	99.9
Residency visas approved																							
Romania	22	48	114	135	313	394	201	207	219	261	159	96	125	106	65	96	88	64	84	65	34	2 896	30.6
Czechia	3	12	27	38	55	38	59	78	85	79	95	75	89	86	76	97	112	115	130	173	99	1 621	17.1
Poland	36	23	46	65	42	65	52	57	64	52	70	74	76	66	82	59	75	87	89	114	73	1 367	14.4
Hungary	11	31	7	24	31	23	57	81	87	64	54	79	138	99	105	61	74	87	80	71	55	1 319	13.9
Bulgaria	63	50	56	66	117	64	40	52	54	61	48	38	28	35	35	32	38	29	39	33	16	994	10.5
Slovakia	6	8	5	21	26	25	19	28	28	18	30	16	16	29	25	13	22	24	34	31	33	457	4.8
Latvia	7	11	4	9	9	8	8	5	19	17	6	9	15	20	14	7	20	10	31	14	9	252	2.7
Slovenia	1	4	6	2	5	5	9	11	10	6	3	11	21	8	15	7	31	12	28	26	14	235	2.5
Lithuania		2	2	1	11	12	11	15	14	9	10	13	9	10	17	8	16	15	20	5	12	212	2.2
Estonia	1	2		4			2	1	6	3	4	0	11	4	8	8	13	9	14	16	16	122	1.3
Total EU-10	150	191	267	365	609	634	458	535	586	570	479	411	528	463	442	388	489	452	549	548	361	9 475	100.0

Source: Department of Labour (2011); Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (2018).

Table 4. Temporary work and residency visas approved by category and nationality, CEE EU-10, 2008–2018 (end of June years) in total

	Czechia	Poland	Hungary	Slovakia	Romania	Estonia	Slovenia	Latvia	Bulgaria	Lithuania	Total
Temporary Work Visa											
<i>WHS</i>	12 618	909	604	702	0	1 087	901	756	2	199	17 778
<i>Skilled work</i>	2 608	697	954	355	681	196	254	177	303	105	6 330
<i>Relationship</i>	1 608	882	771	335	638	182	180	203	219	132	5 150
<i>Work RSE</i>	183	32	44	84	5	2	24	12	5	0	391
<i>Work to residence</i>	138	118	87	46	72	13	18	16	25	19	552
<i>LTBV/Investor*</i>	5	3	12	4	2	0	0	2	0	2	30
<i>Other</i>	3 090	923	742	302	385	161	186	161	238	195	6 383
Total	20 250	3 564	3 214	1 828	1 783	1 641	1 563	1 327	792	652	36 614
Country % of the total	55.3	9.7	8.8	5	4.9	4.5	4.3	3.6	2.2	1.8	100.0
	Czechia	Hungary	Romania	Poland	Bulgaria	Slovakia	Slovenia	Latvia	Lithuania	Estonia	Total
Residency Visa											
Skilled/Business Stream											
<i>Skilled Migrant</i>	522	582	497	433	215	105	119	80	30	16	2 599
<i>Residence from Work</i>	48	62	62	53	18	22	11	6	4	3	289
<i>Investor/Entrepreneur</i>		8	6	4		6	4				28
Family-sponsored Stream											
<i>Partnership</i>	396	145	136	268	73	97	34	54	37	48	1 288
<i>Total Child, Sibling and F1 & 2</i>	18	19	50	15	8	6	5	3	3		127
<i>Parent</i>	3	8	68	12	6	2		3	3		105
International/Humanitarian Stream											
<i>Refugee</i>	20										20
<i>Other</i>	25	25	4	10	2	5		1		1	73
Total	1 032	849	823	795	322	243	173	147	77	68	4 529
Country % of the total	22.8	18.7	18.2	17.5	7.1	5.4	3.8	3.2	1.7	1.5	100.0

Note: * The Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme came into effect in April 2007. The policy allows the horticulture and viticulture industries to recruit workers from overseas for seasonal work when there are not enough New Zealand workers. People employed under the RSE policy may stay in New Zealand for up to 7 months during any 11-month period. LTBV stands for long-term business visa.

Source: Department of Labour (2011), Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (2018).

Migrant transitions: from temporary work and from residency applications

Data presented in Table 5 indicate that only 3 per cent of first-time temporary working visa holders from Czechia gained New Zealand residency within three years of obtaining their initial work visas in the period between 2009/2010 and 2012/2013. A relatively high portion of temporary working Czech migrants in the essential skills category – 26, 24 and 29 per cent in three consecutive three-year periods from 2010/2011, respectively – did transition to residency within three years (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment 2016). However, according to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (2018) data, 91 per cent of essential skills Czech migrants leave New Zealand immediately upon the conclusion of their visa and 95 per cent leave within five years while, for Polish essential skills migrants, these exit rates are 77 per cent and 84 per cent respectively. As presented in Table 5, the highest proportion (18–48 per cent) of migrants gaining residency from first-time temporary work was from Romania, followed by Hungary and Poland, although temporary work visa holders from these countries are far outnumbered by those from Czechia.

Most migrants who gain residency remain in New Zealand for at least five years (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment 2016). Data presented in Table 6 show that, of the 650 Czech migrants who applied offshore and were granted residency between 2008/2009 and 2014/2015, nearly all (643) successfully arrived in New Zealand to take up residency, with 87 per cent still being resident in New Zealand as of June 2016. Similar retention rates are observed in Table 6 for migrants from other CEE countries.

Table 5. Proportion of first-time temporary workers gaining residence within three years, top 7 CEE EU-10 countries, 2009/10–2012/13

Nationality	Number approved 2010/11	% granted residence by 30 June 2014	Number approved 2011/12	% granted residence by 30 June 2015	Number approved 2012/13	% granted residence by 30 June 2016
Romania	66	48	71	48	91	47
Hungary	117	30	83	45	229	24
Poland	194	18	223	24	204	20
Slovakia	42	31	121	16	138	9
Slovenia	132	12	124	7	112	11
Estonia	101	8	106	0	163	3
Czechia	1 202	3	1 633	3	1 664	3

Source: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (2016). Transitions and retention dataset.

Table 6. Proportion of migrants in New Zealand as of 30 June 2016, top 5 CEE EU-10 countries, 2008/09–2014/15

Nationality	Total approvals 2008/09–2014/15	Number approved who arrived	Arrived to take up residence and still in New Zealand	Arrived to take up residence but long-term absent	% in NZ as of 30 June 2016	% long-term absent
Czechia	650	643	562	81	87	13
Hungary	643	622	544	78	87	13
Romania	640	615	531	84	86	14
Poland	519	497	427	70	86	14
Bulgaria	235	228	192	36	84	16

Source: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (2016). Transitions and retention dataset.

Czechs in New Zealand today: migrant stocks

The number of Czechia-born people in New Zealand remains small, although the 2001 New Zealand census shows a significant increase in the population usually resident in New Zealand, which more than doubled between 2001 and 2013, reaching 1 287 as indicated in Table 7. There were 1 659 people present in New Zealand on the day the census was carried out who reported identifying as belonging to the Czech ethnic group. Czechoslovakia-born migrants numbered 118 in 1921, decreasing to 72 in 1936. ‘Czechoslovakia’ refers to the sovereign state that gained independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, while Czechia and Slovakia are the republics into which Czechoslovakia dissolved in 1993. Limited arrivals, between 300 and 400, followed the 1948 Communist coup in Czechoslovakia. One hundred refugees from Czechoslovakia were also accepted and assisted by the government with accommodation and employment in 1968–1969, after the suppression of the 1968 Prague Spring by Warsaw Pact forces (McGill 1982; Wilson 2015). The 2013 census population count of Czechia-born people, including visitors from overseas, reached 1 953 people (of whom 1 287 reported being ‘usually resident’ in New Zealand), reflecting a high proportion of temporary migrants.

Following the 2004/2007 accession of CEE countries to the EU, 2006 and 2013 census data show that the population of migrants from these countries, including Czechia as well as Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, has increased significantly – by 16.3 per cent (Stats NZ n.d. a). Meanwhile, the stock of migrants from the former Yugoslavia/South Eastern Europe (SEE) has declined by 8.9 per cent, the most prominent decreases being among migrants from Croatia and Macedonia. As Table 7 shows, when considering only the CEE EU-10 countries, the growth of the CEE migrant stock in New Zealand is more moderate (8.1 per cent). Nevertheless, in this period, the only migrant stock decreases were for Poland (–2.9 per cent) and Romania (–2.0 per cent). The Czech migrant stock was, as of 2013, the fourth largest among the EU-10 countries, behind Poland (1 947) and Hungary (1 371), and the seventh largest when compared to both the EU-10 and the above-mentioned SEE/non-EU migrant stocks. Russians numbered the highest in 2013 at 5 469. However, the stock of migrants born in Czechia has had the highest growth at 44 per cent, up from 894 to 1 287 people – disregarding the 59 per cent increase in the Lithuanian migrant stock due to its much smaller increase in absolute terms (from 117 to 186 people).

The Czechia-born stock of migrants usually resident in New Zealand in 2013 arrived recently; in other words, the stock is relatively new. Compared to the Russian, Hungarian, and Polish ethnic groups of overseas-born migrants, Czechs had the largest proportion – nearly half (46.6 per cent) – of their usually resident population arrive in the last four years, while only 22.8 per cent of all overseas-born migrants arrived in the same period, at the time of the census (see Table 8). On average, 79.9 per cent of the CEE and Russian populations arrived in the post-communist era (after 1993) and very few Russians arrived before this, as would be expected. Furthermore, only 11.8 per cent of Czechs arrived 20 or more years ago but over one third (37.8 per cent) of Polish migrants and over a quarter (26.5 per cent) of Hungarians arrived in New Zealand 20 or more years ago. The 2011 Australian census recorded 7 437 Czechia-born people present in Australia, of whom 75.1 per cent arrived prior to 2001 (Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2011).

Table 7. Birthplace for the census usually resident population count, CEE EU-10 countries, selected census years, 1921–2013

Birthplace	Census year											% Change 2006–2013	% Female, 2013	
	1906	1916	1921	1936	1945	1951	1976	1991	1996	2001	2006			2013
Romania			24			58	647			918	2 280	2 235	-2.0	53.1
Poland	131			366	1 307	2 003	2 034	2 043	1 995	1 938	2 004	1 947	-2.9	59.9
Hungary			44	34	112	251	1 371			987	1 254	1 371	9.3	50.5
Czechia			118	72	166	357	663			663	894	1 287	44.0	54.5
Bulgaria			5			8	161			504	741	771	4.0	52.9
Slovakia										141	264	333	26.1	62.2
Latvia			14	64	65	423	400			246	261	303	16.0	61.4
Slovenia											159	204	28.3	47.1
Lithuania			8	20	24	184	174			111	117	186	59.0	56.4
Estonia			8	28	45	212	191			99	102	144	41.0	64.6
Total CEE EU-10										5 607	8 076	8 781	8.7	55.2

Sources: Lochore (1951), Stats NZ (n.d. a), Wilson (2015: 5).

Table 8. Ethnic groups (detailed total responses) by years since arrival in New Zealand, overseas-born usually resident population count, 2013 census

Ethnic group	Years since arrival in New Zealand %									
	< 1 year	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	0-4 years total	5-9 years	10-19 years	0-19 years total (after 1993)	20+ years
Czech	16.5	12.2	7.2	4.6	6.1	46.6	25.4	16.1	88.1	11.8
Russian	6.8	6.8	6.0	5.5	5.7	30.4	25.8	40.6	96.8	3.2
Hungarian	6.5	6.8	4.0	2.2	7.4	26.9	28.7	17.3	72.9	26.5
Polish	4.9	7.4	4.2	4.7	3.8	25.0	19.2	17.7	61.9	37.8
Total overseas-born people stated	5.1	4.5	4.0	4.1	5.1	22.8	19.9	25.1	67.8	32.1

Note: Ethnic groups (detailed total responses) include all people who reported belonging to each ethnic group, whether as their only ethnic group or as one of several. Where a person reported belonging to more than one ethnic group, they were counted in each applicable group. Selected ethnic groups presented in this table are for those in which 1 000 or more responses were recorded for the 2013 census usually resident population.

Source: Author's calculations based on Statistics New Zealand 2013 census data.

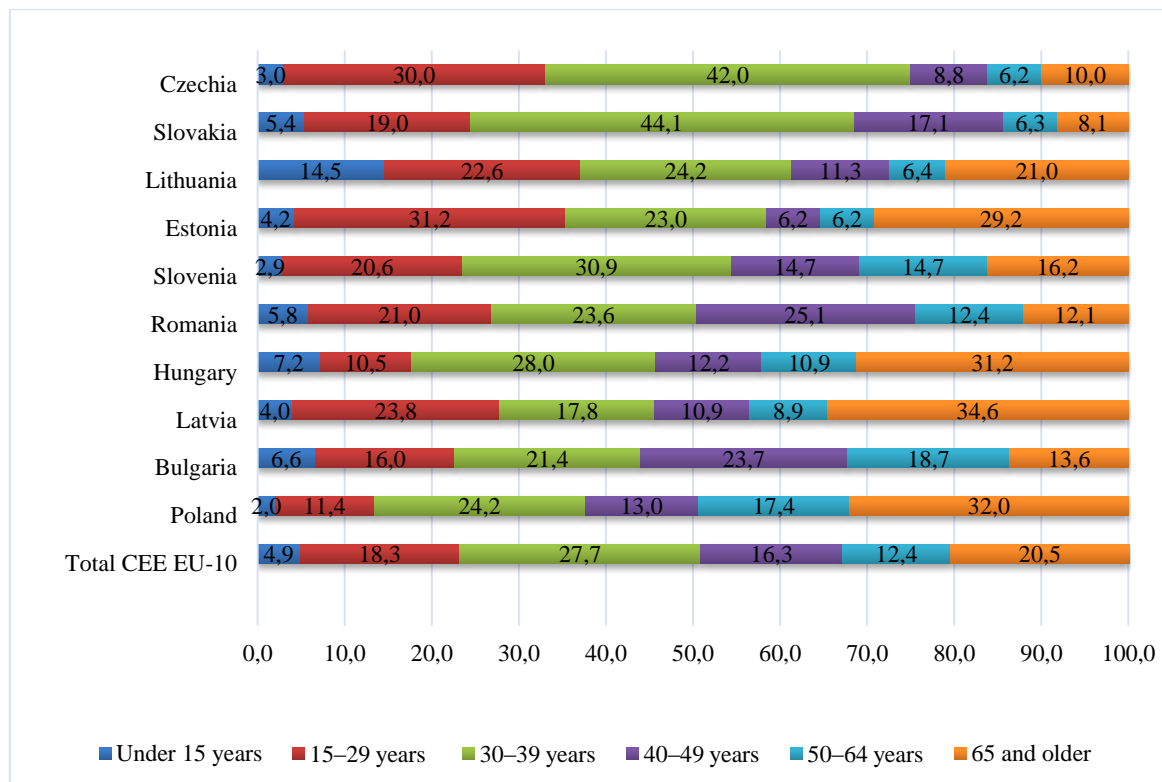
Czechs in New Zealand today: socio-demographic characteristics

Sex and age

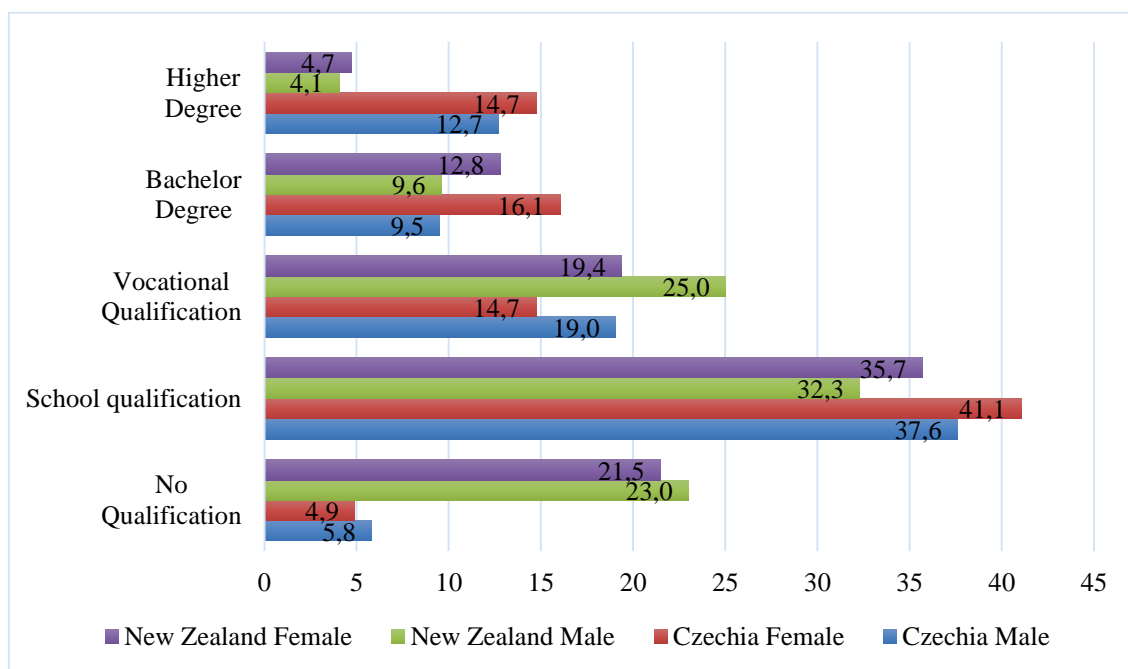
The 2013 census data presented in Figure 3 indicate that Czechia-born usually resident people in that year were a mostly young adult population, with its largest shares in the 30–39-year age group (42 per cent of all usually resident Czech nationals) and the 15–29-year group (30 per cent). The usually resident migrant population from Latvia, Poland, Hungary and Estonia had by far the highest shares of their usually resident populations represented by the 65 years and older age group. Census data from the same year indicate that 54.5 per cent of the Czechia-born population were female, and that only Slovakia had a larger female share of its population in the 30–39 age group, at 44 per cent. Slightly lower female proportions in the 15–29 and 30–39 groups are observed for Romania, Slovenia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Education

The 2013 Census data presented in Figure 4 suggest that, generally, the educational profile of Czech migrants usually resident in New Zealand is more heavily skewed towards Bachelor's and higher degrees (such as Bachelor's honours, Master's and PhD degrees) than the New Zealand-born population. For example, in 2013, 5.4 per cent of Czechs reported having no qualification, while the share of New Zealand-born residents with no qualification was 22.3 per cent. In 2013, Bachelor's degree rates were comparable across the two nationalities though Czechs far outnumbered New Zealanders in the higher degree category, which represented 13.7 and 4.4 per cent for each country respectively. The data in Figure 4 also suggest a strongly gendered pattern in the educational profile of Czech migrants in New Zealand. In 2013 there were more Czech females than males who held either a Bachelor's or higher degree, while the New Zealand-born population's educational profile was slightly female-dominant in 2013.

Figure 3. CEE EU-10 migrants usually resident in New Zealand by age group (%), 2013 census

Source: Author's calculations based on Statistics New Zealand 2013 census data.

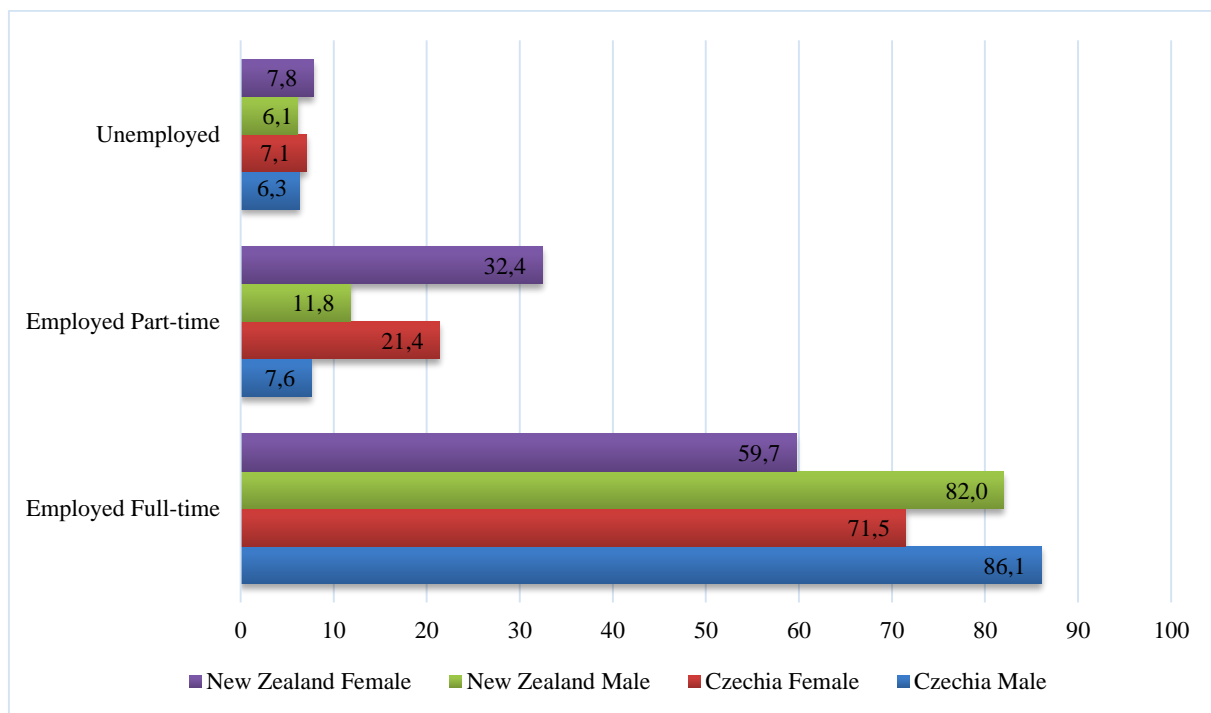
Figure 4. Highest educational qualification of the population aged 15+ years by birthplace (%), 2013 census

Source: Author's calculations based on Statistics New Zealand 2013 census data.

Employment

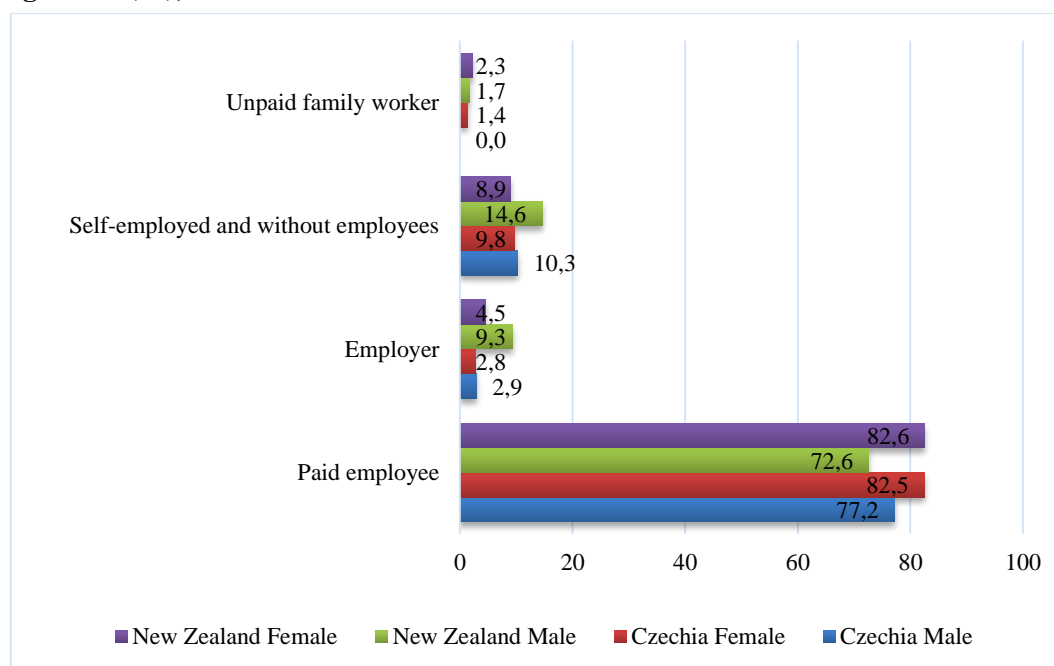
The labour market position of Czechia-born migrants, compared with that of the New Zealand-born population, according to the 2013 census, is presented in Figure 5. In general, across both countries, males have higher rates of full-time employment and labour-force participation. However, the Czechia-born population's employment profile is, on average, more gender-balanced than that of New Zealanders. For example, in 2013, 82 per cent of New Zealand-born males and 59.7 per cent of New Zealand-born females were in full-time employment, while 86.1 per cent and 71.5 per cent of Czechia-born males and females had full-time employment respectively. A similar trend for Czechia- and New Zealand-born rates of self-employment without employees is also evident. Czech migrants have a more gender-balanced though slightly lower self-employment rate than the New Zealand-born population (see Figure 6).

Figure 5. Labour force status of the population aged 15+ years by birthplace and gender (%), 2013 census



Source: Author's calculations based on Statistics New Zealand 2013 census data.

Figure 6. Status in employment by birthplace and gender for employed population resident in New Zealand aged 15+ (%), 2013 census

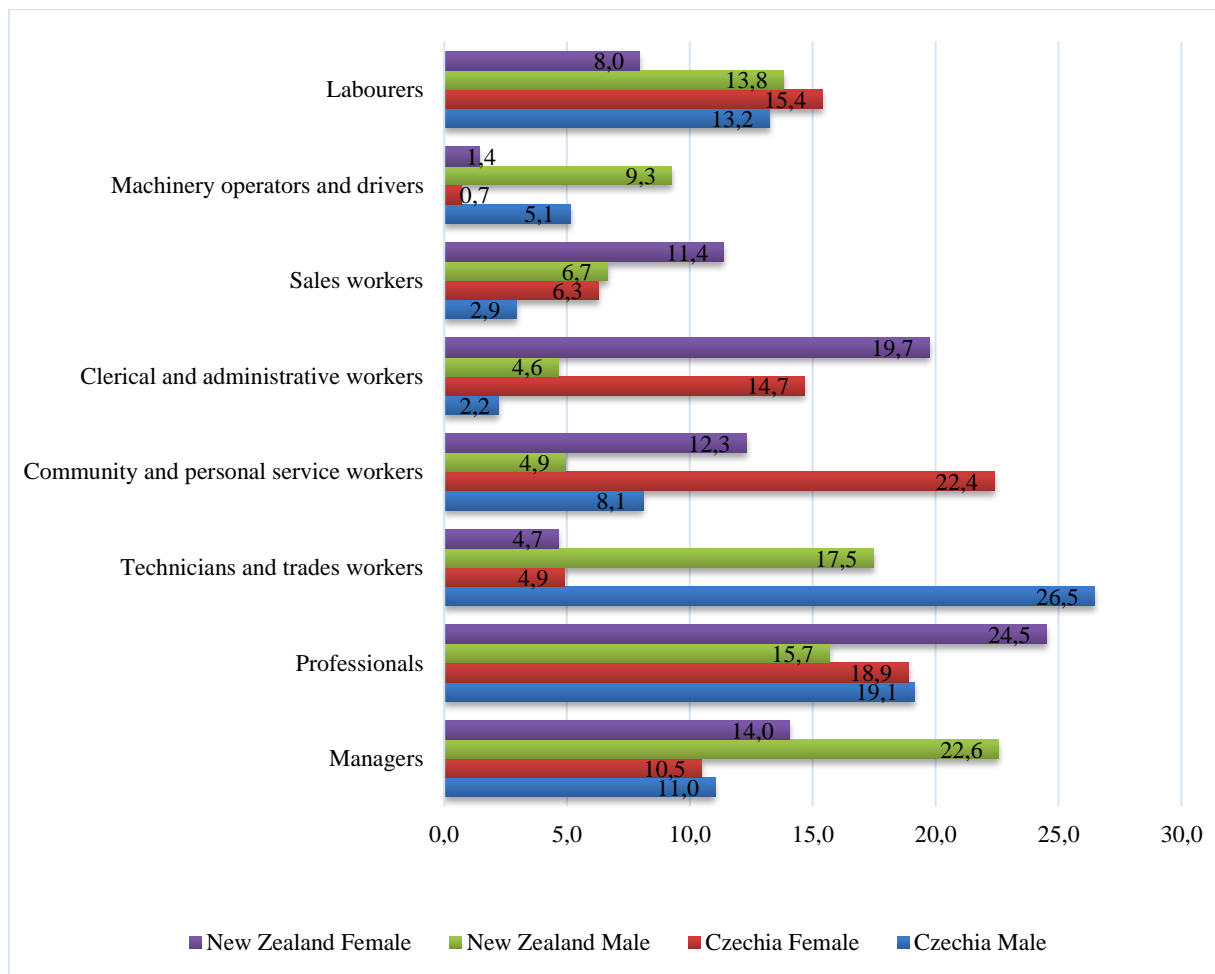


Source: Author's calculations based on Statistics New Zealand 2013 census data.

Occupational status

The data presented in Figure 7 suggest that, in the occupational profile of Czech migrants in New Zealand, the top 5 categories are 'Managers', 'Professionals', 'Technicians and trades workers', 'Labourers' and 'Clerical and administrative workers'. This reflects closely the occupational profile of the 2013 New Zealand-born population, for whom the fifth-largest category was 'Machinery operators and drivers' rather than 'Clerical and administrative workers'. Again, a potential gendered pattern in the labour market outcomes of Czech migrants is observable due to the significant gender-ratio imbalances present here (as there is for the New Zealand-born population). For example, in 2013, 22.4 per cent of Czech females were employed as 'Community and personal service workers' while only 8.1 per cent of Czech males held employment in the same category. For the New Zealand-born population in 2013, these rates were 12.3 and 4.9 for females and males respectively. As expected, in both groups, males heavily outnumbered females in 'Construction' work while females dominated over males in 'Accommodation and food services' roles (see Table 9).

Figure 7. Occupation by birthplace and gender for employed population resident in New Zealand aged 15+ (%), 2006, 2013 census



Source: Author's calculations based on Statistics New Zealand 2013 census data.

Table 9. Employment in industries by birthplace and gender for employed population resident in New Zealand aged 15 and over (%), 2006 and 2013 censuses

	2006				2013			
	Birthplace				Birthplace			
	Czechia		New Zealand		Czechia		New Zealand	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	11.2	9.3	10.1	5.5	6.5	10.4	9.9	4.9
Mining	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.7	0.0	0.6	0.1
Manufacturing	12.4	5.8	14.5	6.6	10.9	5.6	12.9	5.3
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.0	1.0	0.4
Construction	16.9	2.3	13.5	2.3	17.4	2.1	14.1	2.4
Wholesale trade	4.5	2.3	6.1	3.8	2.9	3.5	6.1	3.5
Retail trade	3.4	7.0	8.1	12.0	5.8	6.9	7.6	10.9
Accommodation and food services	6.7	14.0	3.2	7.0	8.7	18.1	3.1	6.1
Transport, postal and warehousing	1.1	2.3	5.8	2.7	2.9	2.8	5.9	2.5
Information media and telecommunications	0.0	0.0	1.7	2.0	2.2	1.4	1.6	1.7
Financial and insurance services	1.1	1.2	2.6	3.8	2.2	2.1	2.9	3.6
Rental, hiring and real-estate services	1.1	2.3	2.8	2.9	2.2	1.4	2.6	2.5
Professional, scientific and technical services	6.7	10.5	7.2	7.7	12.3	6.9	7.9	7.7
Administrative and support services	4.5	4.7	2.8	3.6	1.4	6.3	2.9	3.2
Public administration and safety	1.1	1.2	4.4	4.2	1.4	1.4	5.1	4.9
Education and training	3.4	4.7	3.4	11.1	2.9	6.3	3.8	12.3
Health care and social assistance	2.2	12.8	2.2	13.9	3.6	12.5	2.7	15.2
Arts and recreation services	2.2	3.5	1.6	1.8	2.2	2.1	1.8	1.9
Other services	3.4	5.8	3.9	4.1	2.9	4.9	3.8	8.0
Not elsewhere included	18.0	10.5	5.1	4.6	10.1	5.6	3.8	3.0
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number	258	261	788 559	707 337	408	429	746 046	686 415

Source: Author's calculations based on New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings 2006 and 2013.

Language

In general, most Czechia-born migrants usually resident in New Zealand report being able to speak English, as indicated by the 2006–2013 census data presented in Table 10. In 2013, no age group had an average English-speaking rate lower than 84.6 per cent. On average, female Czechia-born migrants in New Zealand appear to have a slightly higher rate of English-speaking ability than Czechia-born males, across the 2006–2013 census years.

Table 10. English language spoken by Czech-born people by sex and age group (%), 2006 and 2013 censuses

Age group	2006			2013		
	Males	Females	Both sexes	Males	Females	Both sexes
0–14 years	66.7	77.8	72.2	80.0	87.5	84.6
15–19 years	60.0	100.0	75.0	100.0	85.7	90.9
20–49 years	82.0	84.6	83.3	84.6	90.9	87.5
50+ years	86.7	89.5	87.9	89.2	85.7	90.1
Total	81.7	85.7	83.7	85.6	89.8	87.9

Source: Author's calculations based on New Zealand census data for 2006 and 2013.

Discussion and concluding remarks: Czech–NZ liquid migration

The results of this study confirm that, despite emigration from Czechia being the lowest among the 10 CEE countries since the 1990s, migration from Czechia to New Zealand is: (1) increasing, especially since the 2004 eastward enlargement of the EU; (2) the largest, youngest and most recently arrived migrant group from the CEE EU-10 countries; (3) a considerable portion of overall Czech emigration; and (4) mostly for temporary work via the WHS, or travel/tourism, seeing friends/relatives and business rather than long-term education or permanent settlement (gaining residence). Furthermore, nearly all temporary work visa holders from Czechia apparently leave New Zealand at the end of their visa either immediately or within five years. The evidence presented in this article supports the hypothesis that Czechia–New Zealand migration can be understood as an example of twenty-first-century liquid migration that extends beyond the EU: it is temporary, labour-driven and open-ended, with unpredictable patterns of onward migration. Czechs staying transiently in New Zealand may be characterised as ‘young migrants (...) without family obligations and without clear plans concerning their future life’ (Glorius *et al.* 2013: 8), who leave their homeland for a faraway destination under no certainty that they will stay long term or even successfully gain residency or work should they apply for a visa. Many Czechs appear to be arriving in New Zealand initially as tourists but with sufficient skills and work experience to become socially and economically anchored, capitalise on New Zealand's diverse labour opportunities and Working Holiday Scheme, and eventually transition to a different migrant status or become temporary migrants elsewhere – such as Australia, where there are similar economic and social opportunities. It is yet to be seen whether there will be a similar uptake of working holiday visas with the newly established (in March 2018) Working Holiday Visa programme between Australia and Czechia (The Australian Trade and Investment Commission n.d.).

The number of Czechs gaining residence and settling long term remains dwarfed by the temporary flow of Czech migrants, which could be partly explained by the social marginalisation of some migrants in New Zealand (for example due to their foreign accent), including Czechs (Nadkarni 2017; Tan 2018). Nevertheless, the community of Czechia-born people usually resident in the country has been growing faster than the stocks of migrants from other CEE EU-10 countries. The Czech migrant stock appears to be well-educated, with high rates of English-language ability and participation in the labour force, taking up similar professions to the New Zealand-born population. The relatively highly skilled and educated character of the Czech migrant stock in New Zealand can be linked to concerns expressed by International Monetary Fund (IMF) researchers about a potential ‘brain drain’ and ‘skills drain’ in Europe (Atoyan, Christiansen, Dizioli, Ebeke, Ilahi, Ilyina, Mehrez, Qu, Raei, Rhee and Zakharova 2016: 5). The IMF drew attention to the unusually large emigration from CEE and Southern Europe being made up of mostly the young and educated, suggesting that, although this emigration may lead to positive outcomes for the migrants themselves, the large-scale outflows of skilled

workers could adversely affect sending countries' labour forces and productivity, in turn slowing economic growth (Nadeem, Ilyina and Zakharova 2016).

Survey data from 2005–2007 suggest that Czech information technology (IT) specialists favour New Zealand and Australia, alongside other Anglo-Saxon countries, including the United States, Canada and England, as a place to live and work (Vavrečková and Baštýř 2009: 22). The standardisation of technology and the transferable nature of skills in the IT industry are well suited to deliberately open-ended, liquid migration and it is therefore possible that Czech IT specialists move between New Zealand and Australia and on to other destinations frequently and temporarily, taking advantage of flexible immigration frameworks and diverse employment opportunities. As Hugo (2011: 70) notes in the context of temporary migration to Australia, 'patterns of onward migration are greatest for skilled persons and least for unskilled'. Thus, even those Czech migrants who settle in New Zealand as residents and work in skilled industries such as IT may not necessarily all be settling 'for good' but, rather, 'anchoring' here for 'relative stability rather than putting down roots' (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Brzozowska 2017: 1) at a final destination. There is already some evidence to suggest that Czech nurses engage in this kind of liquid anchoring when working in unusual overseas destinations such as Saudi Arabia, where 'Due to accessible transport, communication and information technologies' and their internationally transferable skills they 'have many more opportunities for migration, including country hopping, commuting or circular migration to many countries around the globe' along 'very individual and dynamically evolving' paths (Di Cara 2016: 202).

The Czech community in New Zealand is more female than male, reflecting the quantitative dominance of women in migrant populations from other CEE EU-10 countries since the beginning of the post-communist era (Fassman *et al.* 2014: 50; Morokvasic 2004). Female Czech migrants in New Zealand also appear to arrive with higher educational levels and rates of spoken English and they gain residence through partnership more frequently than their male counterparts. Nearly twice as many Czech women also appear to work in 'Community and personal service' jobs than do New Zealand women. However, the gendered implications of these observations – while undoubtedly important – require further investigation that is beyond the scope of this article.

So why is New Zealand an attractive destination for young adult Czech migrants seeking temporary work and travel, especially when all CEE EU-10 migrants have the same opportunity to visit New Zealand and stay for up to nine months without a visa, as well as move freely for work, tourism and study closer to home within the EU? While detailed qualitative research is needed to answer the question robustly, it can be suggested that Czechia's relatively high standard of living among the CEE EU-10 countries means that Czech migrants may be more likely to afford the long-distance travel and risky journey to New Zealand to take advantage of its flexible migration pathways such as the WHS, whereas migrants from lower-income-level countries such as Poland, Romania and Bulgaria move more predominantly East-to-West within the EU, attracted by the geographic proximity of different labour market opportunities and low wage differentials in neighbouring states (Fassman *et al.* 2014: 45). The average proportion of time a WHS participant spends earning wages/salaries in New Zealand under the WHS and the gross national income *per capita* of their country of origin are strongly negatively correlated (OECD 2014: 70). Data from 2009 indicated that Czech WHS participants spent approximately 65 per cent of their visa duration working, while migrants from Latvia spent almost 75 per cent of their time earning wages/salaries and participants from higher-income countries such as Norway, Denmark and Germany worked for only around one third of their visa duration (OECD 2014: 70). This evidence supports the suggestion that temporary labour migrants from Czechia to New Zealand are economically motivated individuals attracted by a positive wage differential and flexible options for tourism, improving language skills and onward migration. This evidence also points to a problematic tension in the WHS whereby some privileged young migrants from OECD countries seem to be harnessing the benefits of liquid 'lifestyle' migration in New

Zealand, spending on average less than half of their visa duration working, while migrants from relatively lower-income countries such as Czechia and other non-OECD states such as Argentina typically spend over half of their time working – and may, in rare cases, be reliant on temporary work for survival or for supporting their families back home (Opara 2018).

Qualitative – albeit limited – academic research and New Zealand media sources can lend a human face to the discussion of liquid Czech migration. For example, in a video interview conducted by New Zealand Immigration, Czech migrant Lukas Pohl explained how he ‘wasn’t really planning to settle’ in the country when he arrived in Auckland in December 2011, initially via the WHS (Immigration New Zealand n.d. b). Transitioning through several jobs related to his experience in outdoor activities and software engineering, Pohl took advantage of different opportunities as they arose and eventually gained permanent residence although he emphasised that his future remains ‘wide open’ given his status as a skilled, young adult worker with no mortgage, children or partner and overall high satisfaction with an open-ended New Zealand lifestyle (Immigration New Zealand n.d. b). In 2016, *The New Zealand Herald* highlighted a similar story about Ondra Geryk, a Czech migrant who also cited New Zealand’s ample work opportunities and low corruption rates as motivating factors for his decision to move to the country (Small 2016). Like Pohl, Geryk initially travelled alone around the North Island, New Zealand’s most populous and economically active region, before developing a friendship network and securing stable employment in Christchurch, a burgeoning, formerly earthquake-damaged city in the South Island (Small 2016).

Procházková (2012) investigated seasonal migrant work in horticulture (orchards) in rural New Zealand, discussing how some young Czech migrants arrived as short-term tourists, lacked the necessary funds to qualify for the WHS and engaged in irregular work in order to afford a different visa type. Only a few of the study participants made the full transition from a tourist visa to a temporary working visa and eventually took up residency. These findings show how Czech migrants’ behaviour and motivations in New Zealand align with characteristics of liquid migration: temporariness, unpredictability and a readiness to move elsewhere when things do not go as planned or other labour opportunities arise. Procházková, a Czech national herself, worked in orchards as a temporary labour migrant before transitioning to postgraduate university study.

In conclusion, it is difficult to predict how Czech migration to New Zealand will evolve. However, this flow stands out among the diverse movements of CEE EU-10 people to the country and it may be the most productively understood within the theoretical framework of liquid migration. The trends and patterns highlighted in this article deserve further, detailed qualitative investigation, particularly at an individual personal level, in order to develop a clearer understanding of the lived experiences of Czech migrants in New Zealand and the different choices they make to become socially and economically anchored there – often, but not always, on a temporary basis, with unpredictable onward movements to other parts of the world.

Notes

¹ Puhoi is one of only two ethnic villages in New Zealand, the other being Akaroa, a French settlement in the South Island. For further information about Puhoi and the contribution of Czech migrants to New Zealand culture and society, see Silk (1923); Thompson (2013); Wilson (2015); Wood (2012). For information about the Bohemian Association of New Zealand, see <https://bohemianassociation.wordpress.com>.

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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<p>How to cite this article: Opara O. (2018). Bohemia's Antipodes: Post-Communist Czech Migration to New Zealand. <i>Central and Eastern European Migration Review</i> 7(2): 5–34.</p>

Precarious Work? Migrants' Narratives of Coping with Working Conditions in the Danish Labour Market

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This article deals with migrants' experiences of precarious working conditions in the cleaning and construction industries in the Danish labour market as seen from their perspective. The experiences are retained through biographical narrative interviews with migrant workers from Central and Eastern Europe and are used to gain an understanding of the concrete strategies they apply when coping with their short-term contracts, demanding working hours, risk of unemployment and other insecurities. Migrants' experiences of precarity and insecurity in their work is confirmed, to some degree, in numerous research studies. However, the resistance and strategies expressed by the migrant workers in their narratives show that they have also developed specific ways to cope with this precarity. The article contributes to a new understanding of migrants' responses to precarity in which they engage their social and cultural resources to cope with the labour market conditions they face in Denmark.

Keywords: biographical narratives; cultural and social capital; labour security; migrant workers; precarious working conditions

Introduction

Since the enlargement of the EU in 2004, 2007 and 2013, the number of labour migrants has steadily increased and the group of CEE migrants now constitutes an integral part of the Danish labour market (Andersen and Felbo-Kolding 2013). The largest group of migrant workers in Denmark comes from Poland, Romania and Lithuania (STAR 2018), a central characteristic of whom is that they are, on average, younger and have higher levels of education than native workers in the Danish labour market (Rasmussen 2015). Some of the first studies on CEE labour migration showed that Poles who performed cleaning work were highly overqualified when compared to other cleaners (Arnholtz and Hansen 2013). This developmental trend seems to have continued. Recent registrations have shown that migrants are overqualified for their work and, in effect, re-migrate

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after several years of work, no longer to return to Denmark (DST 2018). Although the Danish labour market is generally more regulated and possibly less ‘precarious’ when compared to other European countries (Refslund 2016), precarity can still be found in specific groups more than in others in the Danish labour market, particularly in migrants’ employment (Rasmussen, Refslund, Sørensen and Larsen 2016).

When looking at the different industries in Denmark, statistics show that the cleaning and construction industries employ significant numbers of CEE workers compared to other industries (STAR 2018). Additionally, the figures show that there is a segmentation of workers within semi-skilled and unskilled jobs like cleaning, where many migrants – and a significant proportion of female CEE migrants – are employed (DST 2017). The segmentation of migrants into specific industries in the labour market prevents their full inclusion in the society and socialisation with national workers (Caro, Berntsen, Lillie and Wagner 2015). It also contributes to the deskilling, in particular, of highly educated migrants. Simultaneously, migrants can also be exposed to different uncertainties in their work. For instance, part-time employment in the cleaning industry can result in no job-seekers’ allowance or no unemployment benefits for the cleaners, who have to have full-time jobs in order to be covered by the unemployment benefits system. Construction work is, on the other hand, mostly based on time-limited and seasonal contracts. The uncertainty related to switching between time-limited deals in the construction industry can sometimes result in irregular or non-existent contracts and impact on the worker’s rights and access to social benefits. For example, posted workers from CEE countries have been observed to have very flexible and long working days and lower wages when compared to native workers (Arnholz and Hansen 2013). These different factors regarding their working conditions increase the workers’ insecurity and opportunities for stable employment.

A closer look at the diversity within the group of workers from CEE countries reveals both similarities and differences in their work experiences in the construction and cleaning sectors. The migrants’ narratives refer to the more formal aspects of work precarity that hinder the attainment of capital. These aspects can be operationalised as low earnings, a lack of prospects in work (job security or opportunities for advancement), a lack of quality working time (control over hours of work), a lack of intrinsic job quality (skill use, pleasant social environment), many physical and environmental risks and an overly fast pace of work (Broughton, Green, Rickard, Swift, Eichhorst, Tobsch and Tros 2016). In order to ensure greater nuance when considering the individualised experiences of precarity, this article looks at the management of precarity and its connection to individuals’ social and cultural resources or capital. Capital can, from a Bourdieusian perspective, be considered to facilitate higher salaries, reduce intra-ethnic rivalry and provide more knowledge about workers’ rights (especially working hours). Intra-ethnic rivalry is understood as migrants’ differing views on how to protect their ability to gain political, cultural, social and economic properties (Caspersen 2008), which sometimes results in conflicts between co-ethnics. This study also highlights how unequal pay can create power struggles and insecurity within the cleaning and construction sectors.

Despite the many issues that can occur, migrants see themselves as somewhat well-adapting individuals who are capable of managing several of the above-mentioned precarities. CEE migrants’ experiences of precarity in their work are explored through their understanding of their work-life strategies and their ways of coping within the two specific sectors – cleaning and construction. The article seeks to answer the following research question: *How do CEE migrants experience, and cope with, their working conditions in the Danish labour market and the cleaning and construction sectors?* The purpose of this article is to provide a nuanced scope of CEE migrants’ working conditions by giving them a ‘voice in the debate’. By letting the migrants tell their own stories and recount their work-life experiences, it becomes possible to obtain unique information about their work and how it affects their decision-making and coping strategies.

Framing the issues – precarious work and precarious lives

‘Precarious work’ has emerged as a term and concept in the wake of globalisation and the neoliberal development of Western societies. ‘A precarious era’ reflects the global change in the economy and the insecure working conditions of people who mainly have temporary contracts, less employment security and unstable incomes (Rodgers 1989; Standing 2011). In the post-industrial phase, and particularly in the 1970s, precarious work was used to describe what happened as a result of the phasing out of permanent employment or standardised contracts (Neilson and Rossiter 2008). These developments were both experienced by workers and statistically measured regarding the temporality of work and a demand for higher flexibility in working hours (Doogan 2009, 2015). Kalleberg (2011) described developmental trends in Europe and America and observed that certain groups were more vulnerable to precarious work situations than others – for example, the low-skilled, low-paid temporary workers in the secondary labour market. Researchers have in many cases investigated the prevalence of precarious living conditions in specific vulnerable groups who are exposed to uncertainty in housing, health and (an undocumented) status or citizenship. Migrant groups are observed to lack control over these dimensions and events in life (Massey, Durand and Pren 2016; Shier, Graham, Fukuda and Turner 2016). The ‘precarious lives’ of migrants are therefore made up of uncertainties in living and working conditions (Vallas 2015) and of social inequality (Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013; Anderson, Ruhs, Rogaly and Spencer 2006; Ciupijus 2011; Lewis, Dwyer, Hodgkinson and Waite 2015).

Precarity is also believed to create fewer rights for equal wage levels in specific groups, and for individuals of a certain age, gender, ethnicity and class, who are more disadvantaged in specific working contexts (Lewis *et al.* 2015; McDowell 2015; McDowell, Batnitzky and Dyer 2009; Waite 2009) – for example, those experiencing social inequality based on some of the intersecting social categories (Crenshaw 1989). More vulnerable groups in society are at risk of doing precarious work. Precarity takes different forms and, in some countries, female workers, older workers, trainees, working students and others are observed to be in a more precarious situation than migrant workers (McKay, Jefferys, Paraksevopoulou and Keles 2012). However, multiple and intersecting categories and statuses of workers can create fewer opportunities for stable employment, and not necessarily in a clear-cut way.

‘Precarious work’ has, in some ways, become associated with workers from CEE countries because they are believed to be more ‘willing to work for lower wages’, to perform ‘dirty’, dangerous and demeaning (3D) jobs and otherwise be exposed to precarious working conditions. Labour migration from CEE has been a central topic across Europe (Burrell 2009; Black, Engbersen, Okólski and Pantír 2010; Hviid and Flyvholm 2010) but more research is needed in order to unravel the migrants’ capability to change their working lives and conditions in a Danish context.

Methodological approach

The methodological approach is based on biographical narrative interviews that focus on how people create their life stories. A crucial aspect of this method is to look at how individuals’ life stories are influenced by the societal context of which they are a part – such as situations, relationships and events. Past situations are applied to cope with the present as well as to plan for the future (Hoerning 2006). In biographical narratives, it is possible to analyse ‘life histories’ as past experiences that seem relevant to current life situations (life chances) and by looking at how these events affect the future intentions (life planning) and current actions of the individual. Methodologically, migrants are assumed to be able to take control of their lives, in light of the changes they face in a new society.

The empirical approach was based on ethnographic principles of engagement, participation, empathy and observation (Bryman 2016). This starting point has been crucial for collecting informants in the field. During the research process, participant observations were carried out in clubs and organisations, Facebook groups, church assemblies, voluntary associations, workplaces, the trade union and other events in urban life for migrants and newcomers. The sampling created acquaintances of a more personal nature and, on a couple of occasions, the researcher gained an ‘insider role’ through her Polish background. As such, all the interviews with Polish migrant workers were conducted in their mother tongue. Other interviews were either conducted in English or with the use of an interpreter, who helped out with two of the interviews with Romanian workers. Each interview lasted between 1 and 3.5 hours, with those conducted in Polish having the best narrative and communicative flow. Although linguistic and cultural understanding facilitated communication during the interviews, access to the field through ethnographic methodology was crucial for good dialogue and the quality of the data. A couple of interviews were also conducted in focus groups of two to five people, where they discussed their general experiences of work, migration, Danish society and the labour market, their family and other social relations. These interviews led to the emergence of several short stories and one or two individual biographical aspects; however, in return, additional topics were discussed on a group level, including the issue of work precarity.

The selection of informants for the study of migrants’ work experiences in the cleaning and construction sectors in Denmark reflects gender segregation in the two separate types of occupation, the former being mostly undertaken by females and the latter only by males. The cleaning industry has, however, become more diverse in terms of gender (Lichtenberg and Juul 2016). The choice of incorporating the two sectors was not intended as a comparative case study but, rather, as a strategy for accessing both male and female migrant workers for the interviews. However, the differences and similarities in the working conditions can still be analysed as industry-specific. The focus in this study is on the individual migrants’ work-life experiences and coping strategies, which entails a significant proportion of intersections between many factors. An intersectional approach to the analysis is pursued in order to capture the complexity of social categories (characteristics) and differences in the studied field. Table 1 sets out the characteristics of the various interviewees.

Table 1. Outline of the interviewed individuals characteristics

N=41	Gender	Age	Nationality	Marital status and children	Education	Residence (regions)
Construction N=21	Male: 21	21–30: 5	Romanian: 6	Unmarried: 11	Vocational education and training: 15	North Jutland: 8
	Female: 0	31–40: 10	Polish: 14	Married: 10	Short further education (1–3 years): 1	Funen: 13
		41–50: 5	Czech: 1	Married/unmarried with children: 11	Medium cycle further education (3½–5 years): 2	
		51–60: 1			Long further education (minimum 5 years): 3	
Cleaning N=20	Male: 5	21–30: 14	Romanian: 3	Unmarried: 11	High school education: 1	North Jutland: 13
	Female: 15	31–40: 5	Polish: 10	Married: 9	Short further education (1–3 years): 2	Central Jutland: 1
		41–50: 1	Lithuanian: 2	Married/unmarried with children: 9	Medium cycle further education (3½–5 years): 11	South Jutland: 1
		51–60: 0	Latvian: 1 Hungarian: 2 Slovakian: 2		Long further education (minimum 5 years): 6	Funen: 5

The majority of those undertaking cleaning work had relatively high educational backgrounds and qualifications obtained in their countries of origin. Approximately half of the interviewed cleaners were either studying at a university or a university college, while the other half had the sole status of migrant workers. Nevertheless, these workers also expressed a strong desire to educate themselves, mainly through vocational and Danish language courses. Regarding the construction workers in the sample, the majority had vocational and technical training. In addition, they could be characterised by a lesser degree of association with the country of destination, Denmark, because most were employed on seasonal contracts of 3–4 weeks' duration, with 1 week in their home countries. The country of destination was their primary place of residence, however, and commuting had become a way of life for many of them.

In order to conduct a more in-depth analysis, it will be based on 10 of the 41 interviews. These 10 are chosen because they are exemplary and represent the variety of themes and issues also presented in the other interviews. They therefore also represent specific patterns found in the whole sample. The study is also based on an abductive approach, which takes the point of departure in the empirical data without having any particular theory in mind but, at the same time, acknowledges that theory is needed to explain the findings (Peirce 1979).

Precarious work and coping strategies – a theoretical framework

The conceptual framework used in the analysis of the biographical narrative interviews in this study includes Guy Standing's (1999, 2011, 2014) conceptualisation of precarious working conditions. This approach was chosen because Standing's interpretation of precarious work matches the narratives of the CEE migrants and their work-life experiences. Following the migrant experience of working in Denmark, the study focuses on how they cope with the conditions under which they work. In this regard, Pierre Bourdieu's (1986a, b, 1994) conceptualisation of capital (Bourdieu, 1986a, 1986b, 1994) – economic, cultural and social – is also essential for the action taking place and the space of action that is available to the CEE migrant workers in the labour market.

Generally, migrants do not have precarious employment unless multiple aspects of precarity are prevalent and correlate with jobs in lower positions, where there are few opportunities to enter high-status occupations or middle-status craft occupations (Standing 2011). Status loss and frustration are therefore also more apparent in precarious employment where migrants can suffer from a lack of recognition of their higher formal educational skills and may settle for lower-level jobs. A worker also lacks control in precarious work, missing out on career and skill-development opportunities, and lacking control over their working hours, work intensity, production and the equipment they can use (Standing 1999, 2011, 2014). Furthermore, precarious work situations might prevent the formation of solidarity in the labour community; e.g. the sense of cohesion and community spirit in work, especially for migrants with temporary contracts and unstable employment. Instead, it is likely to be the opposite: it might induce a sense of alienation, competitiveness and instrumentality in work. Since the 'precariat' lacks some control in work, he or she is not necessarily constrained in all aspects and might be able to cooperate and negotiate wage hours, work pace or other aspects of employment. However, the combination of several aspects and the individual's characteristics and biography can create a sensitivity towards precarity. Meanwhile, all securities are significant and apparent in precarious work, though individuals might not value them all equally (Standing 2011). Precarious conditions can, however, exist when particular types of security are missing and when they have a considerable impact on the migrant's well-being and stability in life. Standing (2011) outlines seven types of labour security which clarify those circumstances in one's working life which can be missing. These are:

1. *Labour market security* – the possibility of obtaining an adequate income; at a macro level, this is summarised by government commitment to employees’ ‘full employment’;
2. *Employment security* – the protection against arbitrary dismissal, regulations on hiring and firing and the imposition of fines on employers who fail to adhere to rules, etc.;
3. *Job security* – the ability to and possibilities of maintaining a niche in employment, plus barriers to skill dilutions, and opportunities for upward mobility in terms of status and income;
4. *Work security* – protection against accidents and illness at work, restrictive health and safety regulations, limits on working time, night work and the lack of compensation for mishaps (accidents);
5. *Skill reproduction security* – the opportunity to gain skills through apprenticeships, employment training and make use of one’s competencies;
6. *Income security* – the assurance of an adequate stable income, protected through wage machinery, wage indexation, comprehensive social security and progressive taxation to reduce inequality and supplement low incomes; and
7. *Representation security* – having a collective voice in the labour market through, for example, independent trade unions and the right to strike (Standing 2011).

The seven types of labour security are expressed to varying degrees in the narratives of the migrant workers. However, in the analysis, it is particularly *employment*, *job*, *income* and *representation security* which are the most often expressed and which have a stronger effect on the workers’ lives and how they cope with precarious working conditions.

How an employee deals with precarious working conditions depends on both the resources and the capital that s/he possesses and the social structure that is present. Capital is either the materialised or embodied form of resources that enable the individual to acquire a position in the social space (e.g. space of work). Pierre Bourdieu (1986a) described three distinct forms of capital that represent the immanent structures of the social world. Depending on the context, capital presents itself in three basic forms: *economic capital* – a material capital that can be converted to money and liquidity; *social capital*, which is intangible and made up of social responsibilities, connections or networks – although it can be converted into economic capital, and may be institutionalised in the form of social positions and statuses; and *cultural capital* – also an immaterial possession which can also be converted into economic capital and institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications. Finally, Bourdieu (1986b) talked about symbolic capital, formed by the recognition and legitimisation of economic, social and cultural capital. He argued that cultural capital could be acquired to different degrees, depending on the specific society and social class to which a person belongs. In relation to the conversion of capital, cultural capital transnationally is more opaque and makes the convertibility of capital in this way difficult because of its uneven distribution in different national contexts (Bourdieu 1994). One could say that some forms of capital ‘travel’ better than others due to different national contexts. This would be an indication of a system’s reproductive character. A language skill, which has convertible value as a form of cultural capital, gives access to other resources but can take time to acquire (‘or travel’) in a new context.

Gender and ethnicity are also important markers of social positions that enable or restrict access to cultural, economic, social and symbolic capital. These forms of capital represent various resources that are mutually convertible, with the possibility of being transformed into symbolic capital or higher social positions (Bourdieu 1986a, b). A lack of symbolic or negative symbolic capital can lead to vulnerability in terms of symbolic violence; *inter alia*, this can be expressed through racialised, gendered and precarious labour conditions. When the conversion of capital is blocked, inequality and precarity are produced or maintained.

Experiences of precarious working conditions

In the analysis of the CEE migrant workers' narratives, stories of precarity emerged in the form of low wages, high flexibility requirements and many hours of overtime, as well as competition, power struggles and a high turnover of workers. The narratives offer crucial experiences of precarious work and power struggles and represent the lack of security that is so characteristic of precarious conditions – or, rather, the lack of Standing's (2011) seven types of security previously discussed. Management strategies and actions towards precarity can be converted and institutionalised in innovative solutions, re-organisation in trade unions and a general focus on workers' struggles for better working conditions (Munck, Schierup and Delgado Wise 2011). The struggle for better work and accumulation of new educational and cultural skills are used to overcome insecurity and shaped by migrants' previous experiences of precarious work in their country of origin (Cazes, Nesporova and Office 2003; Castles 2015).

Construction and service work, including cleaning, has become increasingly deregulated and individualised in Europe in recent years, and this development will have greater significance because of the increasing number of job openings filled by migrants (Pajnik 2016; Pajnik and Anthias 2014). Migrant workers' wage levels have increased in line with this deregulation and with EU enlargement. The migrants' narratives in the study indicate that, in some jobs, wages are individually distributed and depend on how their employers and other workers feel that the individual migrant's capital, particularly social capital, has accumulated. Their narratives allude to an uneven distribution of wages created by the social context, where the individual's resources, abilities and social characteristics play a crucial role in their gaining higher economic capital. A search for this latter is, in some instances, seen to result in conflict between Polish workers in the construction industry. Dariusz (41 years old), a plumber who works in construction, expresses his feelings regarding the income insecurity:

We have different pay levels in the construction company. If someone receives higher wages, people get jealous and someone always gets snitched on in front of the employer. The person who does something wrong would receive a scolding from the employer and no one would help him, and particularly not the one who snitched on him; he would feel better and be free from scolding. That is the big problem of Poles on construction sites and in other types of work.

As his interview extract reveals, Dariusz feels that the level of social capital is significant to his income security; he shows the interrelationship between Polish construction workers in precarious work conditions as they compete for better social positions, higher social capital and better pay. Although Dariusz's employment is regulated by Danish labour standards and employers' association, his salary is lower than 'the standard' in the construction industry and only 60 kroner (8 euros) per hour. His work is not illegal and he is hired by a Danish employer, but his lower salary affects Dariusz's situation and social status at work. Dariusz's other narratives, in which he expresses his fears of job loss, alienation and 'intra-group' conflicts allude to precarity in the social-work environment. In his narratives, the employer plays an executive role and is seen to promote certain migrants, who thus outrank others with lower social capital. Being employed as a posted worker, Dariusz is sent to work in all the Scandinavian countries, and due to the travelling between work in Denmark and Poland, Dariusz has a similar work-life balance to other construction workers, who have adopted this working life strategy for several years. Dariusz articulates the issues of how labour mobility encourages migrants to play the breadwinner role in the family and provide them with a seemingly stable family structure. This role and the economic situation together put pressure on the workers in terms of commitment and 'submission' to their work. The lack of income security in the construction industry and the competition for wages can also be explained by the marginalisation of Dariusz and other CEE workers based on their class and migrant status (Pajnik 2016). Here Dariusz recounts why some of the issues could be related to this:

I do not earn as much as a Danish worker but I still do the work because, after all, it is better than other work [in Poland]. We (or I) who work for less money are dependent on what the boss says and does, and on what is written on paper – for example, that this is the minimum wage and that's what we earn on paper – although it is not the truth.

The difference between the wage levels of Danish and CEE workers is here marked by less conflict than between Dariusz's co-ethnic relationships, but still as an unequal experience of work, because of the anticipated higher cultural capital of national workers. In general, statistics showed that male workers from Bulgaria, Lithuania and Romania, along with migrants from non-Western countries, who are between 20 and 59 years old, had a relatively low annual income of less than 225 000 Danish kroner or 30 178 euros (before tax) in 2016. Furthermore, the Danish authorities have suggested that work in the construction industry has become more competitive since EU enlargement due to 'unequal wages' and the presence of more posted workers in the construction industry; work precarity has thus become an issue (Arnholtz and Andersen 2016; Caro *et al.* 2015). Conversely, male workers from Poland placed themselves in the middle of the income distribution, with average earnings of 290 000 Danish kroner (38 896 euros). Although some of the Polish male workers experience income insecurity, the statistics above indicate that they are not the most economically disadvantaged group of workers. Furthermore, CEE women (Polish, Romanian, Lithuanian, etc.) are known to earn less than their male counterparts, with an average of approximately 210 000 Danish kroner or 28 166 euros (DST 2017), which means that the women, and particularly female cleaners, are less privileged economically. Ania, a 27-year-old Polish woman who lives with her family (husband and child) in Denmark, pointed out that her salary in a private cleaning company was meagre:

The salary was, when compared with the work in horticulture, lower than 100 kroner (13 euros) per hour. But I was dependent on it, and had to make money because the season in horticulture was over and there was no longer any need for help, so I had to continue working in cleaning.

Ania reveals that she had to continue the work due to her family situation in Denmark and her mother in Poland, whom she wanted to help financially. In her narratives, she also states that the financial insecurity was exacerbated by issues of employment insecurity and poor working conditions such as the lack of instruction and the exploitation of workers:

If I was promised a day off, I never got it. If I planned on having just one weekend off, in the morning, I would receive a call that I had to meet up for work anyway. I never got the whole day off. It was quite awful conditions.

In Standing's terminology, Ania's experiences here would imply that great deals of uncertainty in income and work security are taking place. Some of these issues were also followed up by the other cleaners in the sample, who were tied by the odd working hours and felt pressured by their employer to go to work. In an interview with a young Polish couple in their early 30s, it became apparent that income insecurity is sometimes followed by job insecurity and largely affects CEE workers in the cleaning industry. The male worker, Karol, is 32 and has had employment in the cleaning, manufacturing and construction industries. His quote below demonstrates that economic uncertainty in the cleaning industry has a significant impact on a household and a family's living conditions if the workers get fired from their jobs in Denmark or do not receive their salaries:

If the worker has a loan in Poland – let's say he owes 1 million Danish kroner – and he suddenly becomes unemployed in Denmark, he and his family do not have anything to live on. So that's why they, as people generally say, 'lick the arse' of their employer, in order not to get fired from the job. And someone always gossips about the other to the boss (...). The migrant workers live at the expense of the lives of other migrant workers. Well, you know what I mean, right? They sell themselves and become slaves to their bosses at work.

Although Karol and Daria talked about other migrants' general experiences of precarity, not only caused by work itself but by the families' general dependency on a stable income, they suggested that their living situation meant that they were more predisposed to precarious work in terms of job insecurity based on 'slave-like working conditions' and 'lower-class work'. The notion of class has become indirectly important for Daria and Karol because they are both highly educated and have tried, in different ways, to deal with labour precarity through knowledge, trade union membership, further education and the use of close Danish friends who have helped them in their precarious working situations. In the study, many workers had already secured themselves financially through unemployment benefits or trade unions. However, the road to either getting benefits or becoming a member of a trade union is not necessarily with the 'endorsement' of the employer, as 31-year-old Katarzyna from Poland, who had worked in hotel cleaning for nearly five years, explained:

In the beginning, when we had to sign contracts, we had conversations with our employer. When my employer asked me if I was a union member, I answered 'Yes', because I confused it with my unemployment benefits. He made big eyes, sighed and said: 'Which one?'. So I got the impression that he would be unhappy with me being a unionist. Then I said: 'Stop, stop, I meant a member of an unemployment fund' and he did like this [exhales deeply]...

She speaks here about when she received her employment contract and about her employer's reactions to the issue of her representational security. The policy of flexicurity – which is a combination of flexibility and security in the Danish labour market model – allows the employer to hire and fire employees due to high numerical flexibility and cyclical fluctuations in the economy. However, employees are permitted to protect themselves against these conditions through the use of unemployment insurance and with the help of trade unions, especially if the worker is fired unjustly or illegally. Like Katarzyna, Daria also mentions the importance of acquiring membership of a trade union and how it influenced her relationship with her employer, who eventually fired her because she had requested better work conditions. Daria talks, below, about the lack of employment security in cleaning jobs for both of them and about how Karol was fired from the cleaning company where they both worked:

When we came back from Poland, Karol was dismissed without us knowing why. Yes, and then [there] began to be problems for both of us. (...) Because I had too much contact with the union I was no longer a pleasant employee, so she had to get rid of me somehow. While she could not do away with me legally, she got rid of Karol; that was the most likely the reason for his dismissal.

In the above quote, the couple are recounting an episode in which a trade union was involved, and which was personally directed against Karol. The latter subsequently received threats and allegations of bad workmanship, even though this could not be proved by the management of the private cleaning company. Daria and Karol also believe, like some of the other interviewed workers in the sample, that Polish workers who are more prone to 'run for the money', engage in too much overtime, put up with poor treatment and live in fear of being

sacked. They are therefore more vulnerable in precarious work situations. Karolina, a female Polish cleaner aged 42, shares similar views about what precarious work conditions mean for CEE migrant workers. Below, she talks about her husband's work as a welder in a private company. The precarity of the situation creates a feeling of anxiety for the workers, who fear being sacked if they do not work overtime. Karolina said that Danish workers are in less precarious situation than the Poles:

The Danish workers make weekend plans and work does not get in the way, unless they really want to go to work on a Saturday. But Poles... I think they are more afraid of losing their job. (...) So when my husband heard that there was no more overtime and about long meetings at the office and that they needed to fire 20 people, he became really nervous and immediately worried that he may be fired again.

Overtime and weekend work are an individual choice, but some migrant workers may feel the company's survival to be 'their responsibility' and feel pressured to take on more overtime and weekend work in order to avoid being replaced, subcontracted or dismissed (Bernstein 1986). In the above case, Karolina also refers to younger trainees, new employees, Polish workers and other CEE migrants who work in the company. The social categories of the workers' employment statuses, age, ethnicity and gender expose the individuals to precarity (Standing 2011); this applies particularly, for example, to younger and more inexperienced CEE workers who have temporary employment contracts. Fixed-term contracts may, therefore, provide more security for migrants and be of decisive importance for workers who seek permanent residence in Denmark.

This part of the analysis, in particular, addresses the importance of the social and economic aspects of precarity that apply to both industries, due to the low wages, high job turnover, replacements, part-time nature of the work, need for availability (flexibility) and many overtime hours involved in both sectors. The analysis shows that precarious working conditions include power struggles and unequal wage levels. Intra-group conflicts are particularly pronounced in places where migrant workers experience a greater degree of rivalry between co-ethnics, and in segmented work occupations and workplaces in the cleaning industry (Thörnquist 2015). The experiences are rooted in general income and employment insecurity and how it affects CEE workers. There is also considerable variation between migrants who manage to generate the capital necessary to overcome the precarious work conditions of low wages, high job turnover, replacements, part-time nature, need for availability and extensive overtime hours.

This study indicates that job insecurity can be a concern for cleaners who are reliant on the work as their primary source of income. However, their lack of employment and job security and plans to become full-time workers can motivate them to improve their work conditions and gain representational security (support from a trade union). Conversely, construction workers who are employed on seasonal and temporary contracts and who simultaneously feel underpaid in their work, lack employment and income security (Standing 2011). Some of these struggles are aggravated by the separation of a family between two countries, where the workers have to manage a transnational working and family life. The following section addresses how migrants cope with such precarious working conditions.

Coping with precarious working conditions

The ways in which migrant workers deal with the precarious working conditions in cleaning and construction work are influenced by their past experiences, life plans and life chances in Denmark. Here, the relationship between life chances and life planning determines how different life situations are handled (Thomsen 2006). Working life is rarely completely separate from an individual's family and spare time, and individuals mostly try to create a mutual relationship (or attempt to create coherence) between them (Hoerning 2006). In this

context, it is crucial to consider which type of capital the individual worker possesses and to what extent it can be transmitted into a Danish context. If there is a lack of opportunity to convey capital (cultural, social and economic) in the labour market, the precarious working conditions are more likely to be accepted as a fact of working life. For example, 29-year-old Agnieszka, a single woman from Poland who works in the cleaning sector, explained the situation thus:

But then again you can get used to some conditions. It is true. In the house that I lived in before, we were 16 people altogether... Yes, and we only had two kitchens and a bathroom. It was pretty hard-core. But I could adapt to the circumstances... So I think that people can adapt regardless of the situation. Similarly, I believe it is the same for the work conditions. No matter what the work is like, if you really want it, you can do it.

Accepting the conditions you face, as Agnieszka showed above, can be seen as a pragmatic way of dealing with the available opportunities, regardless of the type of work involved. In this way, Agnieszka's particular work conditions also reflect the individual's ability to adapt, deal with precarity and maintain a life plan. Agnieszka further states that: 'Cleaning work does not always allow you to plan your spare time. If something comes up at work, you have to be there to help. There is no one forcing you, but there's this unwritten rule that if there is work, we all have to help each other, right?'. In the narrative extract, she also describes how mutual understanding and social responsibility helps the cleaning staff deal with their insecurity in the work environment. An acceptance of overtime, fast-paced or weekend work and other flexible working hours, including night shifts, may sometimes be the only option to maintain any kind of job, particularly those like Agnieszka's job in cleaning.

Some of the CEE workers have stable social relationships with their co-ethnics and help each other in terms of access to work and of job retention – which is important for both cleaners and construction workers. Bourdieu (1986b) said that social capital, gained through a social network, plays a crucial role and can be both qualifying and limiting in relation to what options are available when sustaining and managing a job. Florin, a 26-year-old male Romanian cleaner, considered how social networks can play a role in dealing with hard and demanding work:

And of course, in the beginning, I had to work a lot, because I did not know if I could keep my job, because it's really hard, because you have to prove that you are really fast at cleaning, and I believe that my sister really had to kick my arse the first time I worked in the hotel. I helped her last summer for a day because she had too many rooms to clean, and then she told me that I also have to be really quick if I am to manage cleaning work.

Florin's narrative shows which resources and criteria are required to handle the fast pace of work in cleaning jobs, especially in hotels. He gained knowledge about the working conditions through his sister, who helped him to attain the resources relevant to this type of work. According to Florin, CEE workers who are unable to keep up the pace in cleaning work are the most at risk of being fired. This issue is significant for how Florin understands his working conditions and deals with the high amount of pressure. To maintain a job and income, social capital is relevant as it enables workers to help each other out in critical situations, especially within the family. Pawel, a 36-year-old Polish male construction worker, has a slightly different approach to work pressure and working hours, and how he makes use of his employment opportunities:

I work 12 hours every day for 18 days but I have 10 or 12 days off, and my boss... How should I say that? My boss takes advantage of the situation that I have the opportunity to work longer, faster but not cheaper. I get 170 kroner (23 euros) per hour as do the Danes. (...) However all of that suits me very well because I can work 18 days and then go back for a week and a half. Because I have more time to spend with my family than I had when I worked in Poland, I am pleased with the arrangement.

Despite the long working hours and his constant availability to his employer, Pawel also states that he uses the working conditions to his advantage, and simultaneously maintains a loyal social relationship with his employer – a relationship which allows him to become an empowered craftsman in his field. This particular aspect can be difficult to achieve in cleaning work, where there is high unemployment and job insecurity, as Daria and Karol referred to earlier. Their coping strategy was based on their gaining useful knowledge about the work conditions and social rights of workers in Denmark. The acquisition of cultural capital happens when some of the workers become aware and recognise that they are subject to unusual or precarious working conditions when compared with Danish workers and want, therefore, to be considered as equal workers. Daria, from Poland, who is 30 and the mother of a small child, stated:

I joined the union and it began to interest me because I knew there was something wrong. I could simply tell, because I could see how the others worked. While we ran around daily in jumpers wet with sweat... because you had to run around to get everything done, right... I had to carry 10 full bags of garbage daily, even though I was pregnant. I had said to my employer that I would come back after my maternity leave, but only if she would change my working hours, because I could not... I did not have anyone whom I could leave my child with, so it could not be earlier than 7 in the morning. (...) I also got a warning about being fired.

Daria's way of handling the increased rate of work, physically demanding conditions with low occupational safety, was to gain knowledge about workers' general rights – for example, to be on maternity leave and to have the right to slow down the rate of work. In fact, motherhood and having children is one of the gendered inequality factors in the labour market (Cevea 2016; Ollus 2016), where migrant women in particular lack collective agreements and are more exposed to a high degree of uncertainty in their employment in cleaning. For construction workers, like Pawel, or for CEE posted workers who commute between work and their country of residence, family is a segregated part of everyday life. This means that some of the construction workers can keep their family and working lives separate, more than permanently resident migrants working in the field of cleaning – and especially women with children. The lack of recognition of their rights as mothers who need to adjust their working hours can be seen as harassment in the workplace by the employer. This is partly because they are no longer considered to be part of a flexible workforce due to their motherhood engagement.

Acquiring language skills is, in many respects, essential for the attainment of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986a) and crucial when dealing with the type of precarity (threats of firing) mentioned above. Cultural capital can be essential for the migrant workers dealing with employment insecurity in cleaning, as Daria explains:

There were many ways to learn Danish. Wherever I was, I read, for example, some rules or something. If I did not know, I had to ask. I asked a Dane at work, for example, 'Look, how does this work here? For example, this rule here?'. Yes, it was like that for me too, so... And the more I knew, the safer I felt in relation to work and society... because I believe that knowledge has the most significant value.

Knowledge and information are essential tools for participating on equal terms in the labour market (Standing 2011). In this context, one finds a pattern in which both cultural capital and the length of stay in the country are of great importance for how labour migrants become aware of other work conditions in the destination country. Cultural capital is an essential factor for the migrant's ability to apply an appropriate strategy in response to the conditions to which he or she is exposed. The level of capital is crucial to whether the individual migrant worker uses either an adaptation strategy or a reaction strategy (Berry 2005) as a way of coping with precarity. The former strategy is characterised by adapting to the conditions available, whereas the latter is built on striving for equal treatment and recognition. Dealing with precarious working conditions by using adequate resources and capital depends not only on a single factor but on the interaction of several factors, where there is a certain degree of unpredictability in terms of the migrant's working conditions. In this case, it is difficult to generalise about work, gender, ethnicity or other social factors. Some of the most dominant stories of cleaning workers suggest that they felt more stressed and worn down than construction workers. However, the latter stated that their long working hours are also physically hard in the long term. Both cleaners and construction workers experience employment insecurity or the fear of being fired, which due to the pressure or fear also induces an increased pace of work. Furthermore, cleaners, in particular, mentioned that their jobs are in danger if they improve their cultural capital by gaining more knowledge, becoming members of trade unions (obtaining representational security), learning the Danish language and taking on further education. The greater accessibility of these ways of acquiring social and cultural capital for migrant cleaners, when compared with the narratives of the construction workers, makes it clear that this factor has a substantial impact on the many dismissals of CEE workers in the cleaning industry. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that migrant workers in the cleaning sector are more prone to precarious working conditions than those in construction. This difference could be linked to gender in the two sectors and to the type of work performed in cleaning.

Concluding discussion

Based on the interviewees' experiences of employment relations in the cleaning and construction industries in Denmark, a clear pattern emerges of the migrants' dependency on others in order to maintain their employment and income. This dependency creates an unequal balance of power between the CEE migrant workers and the employer in either industry. The power relations are expressed through how much influence a worker has on wages, working conditions, occupational and representational security and opportunities for advancement. The occurrence of these conditions in work also corresponds to work precarity as conceptualised by Standing (2011). Precarity can be observed in the narratives of migrants but is mostly related to hierarchy in the workplace and particularly in processes of negotiation (Watson 2003) between employers and migrant workers. However, if the negotiations implied that the migrant workers had gained increased cultural and social capital – more knowledge about the Danish labour market system, Danish language skills and union representation – the workers were seen as posing a threat to the 'work relationship hierarchy'. Cleaners, notably, reported experiencing situations where they were fired soon after their employer became aware that they had signed up for membership in a trade union. Participants in the study have generally indicated that the relationship between the employer and migrant is more 'balanced' if their employer has an ethnic-Danish background, compared to relationships with co-ethnic employers. However, this aspect is also outlined regarding the problematic 'power struggle' between the migrant workers themselves, where some workers accuse others of 'sucking up to the boss' or 'engaging in slave-like behaviour'. In this case, a stronger ethnic hierarchy arises in the workplace and causes power struggles, if the workers are keen to improve their position and create a greater guarantee of employment and job security by applying a reaction strategy to cope with precarious working conditions. This study has shown that CEE migrants sought to 'balance out' any unequal relationships by drawing on their

resources and looking for other jobs that offered higher wages, better working conditions, occupational security, representational security and generally more opportunities.

Social capital plays a crucial role in accumulating those resources and other forms of capital (economic and cultural) which the individual can obtain in a given context. Regarding the importance of social networks and how reliable they are, it makes a difference whether a network is limited to the migrant's own ethnic group and/or also includes a network of different ethnic groups (Agnitsch, Flora and Ryan 2006; Putnam 2000), in particular Danes, in this case. The narratives of the labour migrants also reproduced the fact that the relationship with the employer and the working culture of the country can give rise to experiences of inclusion in a society through cleaning and construction work. Here, social relations play a crucial role in the migrants' overall well-being and sense of employment security. Research suggests that social interaction between migrants and national workers is limited by segregation within, and lack of daily interaction outside, the workplace, as well as migrants' social characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, social position and length of stay (Gsir 2014). One important factor seems to be the degree of migrants' isolation or integration in the workplace and how precarious work conditions can enhance the effects of isolation and *vice versa*.

Precarious working conditions amplify power struggles for better wages, especially if there is an opportunity to earn a better wage than in the migrants' countries of origin. Denmark has markedly higher salaries compared to the wage levels in CEE countries (OECD 2017). The higher wage level is regarded as a gain at the beginning of the migrants' experience but, over time, as the acquisition of knowledge about Danish conditions and labour laws, increases the migrants' struggle for higher wages and symbolic capital or recognition (Bourdieu 1986a). Furthermore, research shows that CEE migrants increasingly experience discrimination, negative stereotyping and disqualification of their skills in the labour markets of other European countries (Alberti *et al.* 2013; Anderson *et al.* 2006; Ciupijus 2011). These factors are crucial to the experience of precarious work and the individual migrant's coping strategies. The narratives in this study contribute new knowledge on labour migrants' working lives and how they cope with precarity. They also show that there is a need to strengthen efforts to improve migrants' working conditions and ensure their social mobility and equality by strengthening their coping strategies and possibilities to make use of their social and cultural capital which, in this study, has been shown to prevent some aspects of work precarity. Research needs to pay more attention to already 'established' coping mechanisms of migrant employees in order to gain a nuanced insight into what precarity is and how it varies according to the sector or type of industry. Generally, the patterns in the migrants' narratives indicated that the cleaners are more exposed to social conflicts, exploitation and lay-offs in their working environment than the construction workers. On the basis of these experiences, both cleaners and construction workers were able to prevent different work precarities having a substantial effect on their overall well-being, over a more-extended period.


Funding


The study was funded by The Danish Working Environment Research Fund – Danish Working Environment Authority.

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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How to cite this article: Pljevaljcic Simkunas D., Thomsen T. L. (2018). Precarious Work? Migrants' Narratives of Coping with Working Conditions in the Danish Labour Market. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* 7(2): 35–51.

The Employment of Foreigners in Poland and the Labour Market Situation

Maciej Duszczyk*, Kamil Matuszczyk*

Between 2014 and 2016 the number of foreigners on the Polish labour market increased by over 300 per cent. They were mainly Ukrainian citizens taking up seasonal employment on the basis of the so-called ‘simplified system’. According to the literature, such a large increase in labour immigration in a short period of time may be an important factor in the growth of unemployment and the reduction of the employment rate of natives. The main purpose of this text is to show the correlation between the increase in the employment of foreigners in Poland and to determine whether or not this has had an impact on the deterioration of the state of the labour market. For this purpose, data from the Central Statistical Office and the Polish Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy were collected. As a result of our analysis, it was found that the significant increase in the presence of foreigners on the Polish labour market, which the country has faced in recent years, was not correlated with the rise in unemployment, the increase in the rate of economic inactivity and the availability of seasonal jobs. On this basis, we can state that the increase in the supply of foreigners on the Polish labour market, compared to other factors influencing it, was weak enough for the negative effects of the increased employment of foreigners to not occur.

Keywords: labour migration; Poland; unemployment rate; employment rate; economic inactivity

Introduction

The scale of the inflow of foreigners to the country in recent decades places Poland among those states of growing attractiveness to migrants. From a country from which more than 2 million people emigrated in the years 2007–2013, Poland is becoming a New Immigrant Destination or NID (Górny and Kaczmarczyk 2018; Winders 2014). In the last three years (2013–2016) the number of seasonal workers from foreign countries has grown by more than 300 per cent and, according to estimates, exceeded 1 million people. In the history of migrations of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, similar developments took place in Western Europe in the 1950s and 1960s (statistically, but not with regard to the immigrant profiles or countries of origin). In

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Southern European countries (Portugal, Spain, Italy) which have traditionally recorded a high outflow of local residents, the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries recorded a high inflow of foreigners, both from European Union member-states and from third states (King 2000; Ribas-Mateos 2004). Migration processes in Poland deserve particular attention, for at least two reasons – first, owing to the dynamics of an immigration not encountered before and the domination of a single nationality group among the foreigners, namely Ukrainians. Secondly, owing to the sustained emigration of Poles to other EU member-states, with the number of those staying for more than 12 months increasing by 113 000 in 2016 compared to 2015. According to Central Statistical Office's (2017b) estimates, as of the end of 2016 the number of Poles staying in the EU amounted to 2 096 000. This means that Poland records a growth – at the same time – in both the inflow of immigrants to the country and the emigration of Polish natives (e.g. CSO 2017b). Such a phenomenon has been extremely rare in the history of migration.

In public debates on the consequences of the influx of foreigners there is a view put forward that they provide an alternative to employing native workers, mainly because immigrants agree to work in worse conditions of employment than those demanded by natives (e.g. Jończy 2016; Zimmermann 2004). As a consequence the rise in labour migration from abroad is likely to result in a growth in unemployment as well as in a deterioration of other indicators reflecting the situation of natives in the labour market. At the same time, researchers analysing the impact of immigration on the Polish labour market are not univocal about its impact on the growth in unemployment or the difficulty for natives to find employment, although there is a prevailing opinion that this impact is quite limited (e.g. Borjas, Grogger and Hanson 2008). Most researchers point to other factors – related, for example, to the economic growth rate or to demographic processes – as being central for any analysis of the changes taking place in the labour market (Fargues 2011; Górny 2017; Tyrowicz 2017). At the same time, the role of immigration policy in managing the changes in the labour market is frequently stressed (Zimmermann, Bonin, Fahr and Hinter 2007). A high number of vacancies should be conducive to a liberalisation of immigration-related regulations, while unemployment growth should lead to them being made stricter. Policy measures should be thus adjusted to the changes taking place in the labour market of the destination country. Therefore, tracing the interrelations between the dynamics of immigration and changes in the labour market of the destination country allows for conscious decisions to be made with regard to immigration policy. The sharp growth of labour migration to Poland observed in recent years makes the case of the Polish labour market an interesting example through which to examine the relationship between the dynamics of the influx of immigrants and the short-term changes in selected labour market indicators.

The goal of the article is to evaluate whether or not the sharply increased presence of foreigners in the Polish labour market correlates with changes regarding the level of unemployment, employment and economic inactivity, as well as seasonal job offers in Poland in the short-term. Although, there are many other factors, apart from immigration, that influence labour market output, an analysis of the Polish case will enrich research on interrelations between an increased inflow of employment immigrants and the changes taking place in the labour market, with a novel perspective coming from a new immigration country. By informing policy-makers about the tendencies occurring in the Polish labour market in recent years it will contribute (we believe) to the conscious formation of future Polish immigration policy.

The article focuses on two groups of labour migrants to Poland: foreigners who gained access to the Polish labour market on the basis of a work permit and those who secured employment on the basis of an employer declaration of intent to employ a foreigner (the so-called simplified procedure).¹ These two groups represent two distinct patterns of labour immigration to Poland, differing with regard to both the volume of workers coming to Poland (the scale of employment of foreigners on an employer declaration is several times higher than that based on a work permit), the length of stay of foreigners and the main sectors of employment.

Examination of the interrelations between the influx of foreigners to Poland and changes in the Polish labour market is based on the analysis of interrelations between the volumes of labour migrants and selected labour market indicators in 2004–2016 (for employer declarations the period is shorter and starts in 2007). Two types of source have been used in the analysis: registries of the Polish Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy and statistical data of the Central Statistical Office concerning the labour market. The labour market indicators examined in the article have been chosen according to Eurostat methodology and terminology.

Selective literature review

Most of the analyses published after 2000 concerning the relation between immigration and the unemployment rate in a host country (or region) prove that it is difficult to ascertain such a correlation unambiguously. Paradoxically most discussions regarding the impact of immigration on the functioning of the economy are undertaken in typical countries of immigration with long experience in receiving foreign workers (Kaczmarczyk 2015a). Both European and American researchers are unanimous in saying that the influx of additional labour does not have a negative influence on the labour market and that it does not bring about unemployment among the natives. At the same time, the influx of immigrants can, in the short term, have a negative effect on labour market indicators on a regional scale, causing an outflow of workers from the labour market either to unemployment or to economic inactivity. Alternatively, it compels mobility – i.e. the search for employment in other regions of the country or even abroad (Borjas 2005; Kerr and Kerr 2011). As well as unemployment, in analyses of the impact of migration on the labour market, some attention is paid to the impact of migration processes on the levels of pay for native workers (e.g. Angrist and Kugler 2003; Dustmann, Fabbri and Preston 2005).

In the literature on the topic, a number of works can be highlighted which show both the positive and neutral as well as the negative effects of the influx of immigrants on a particular labour market. For example Borjas (2003), analysing the influx of immigrants – particularly from Mexico – to the US, noted that, among other things, immigration reduces employment and contributes to the growing ebb of native workers from the labour market.

A very limited, but still negative statistical correlation between the influx of immigrants and the employment rate in general was proven by the research carried out in a group of 18 European countries. Angrist and Kugler (2003) estimated that an increase in the general level of employment of foreigners by 10 per cent leads to a decline in the employment of native workers by 0.2 to 0.7 per cent on average.

Boeri and van Ours (2008) noted the correlation between immigration and rate of unemployment and concurred that immigration can have a negative impact on the labour market in those countries where there is a statutory and rigid minimum wage. In view of the fact that, in those countries, we have a ‘fixed number of jobs’, the influx of foreigners brings about an increase in competition, which can cause a rise in the level of unemployment among native workers.

The results of research conducted by Rios-Avila and Canaivre-Baccareza (2016), based on data from the US for the years 2001–2013, also indicate that immigration has no significant impact on the situation in the labour market. At the same time, increasing immigration can adversely affect people who are already unemployed, who will thus have greater difficulty in finding a job. It is therefore the unemployed rather than the employed who, to a much greater extent, feel the consequence of the presence of immigrants in the labour market. Additionally, the analysis proved that the presence of immigrants in the labour market is especially disadvantageous for young people as well as those with lesser education.

Fromentin (2012) came to a different conclusion. He put together panel data regarding immigration and the labour market for 14 OECD countries for the years 1975–2008. Based on these data, he concluded that immigration does not lead to an increase in short-term unemployment – and even influences the reduction of long-term unemployment. Ruhs and Vargas-Silva (2015) emphasise that the impact of migration on wages and unemployment depends on whether and to what extent immigrants' qualifications supplement or substitute for the skills of native workers. Reviewing the research on the relations between immigration and unemployment in the United Kingdom, they point out that analyses conducted thus far do not prove any significant influence on the level of unemployment in the country – conclusions confirmed by the results of research conducted by Dustmann *et al.* (2005). Their analyses, which are based on data from the years 1983–2000, prove that immigration has a negative impact on the level of employment, on participation in the labour market and on the level of unemployment of British workers with secondary education. At the same time, they found that persons with a graduate or postgraduate education feel positive consequences connected with the influx of foreigners to the United Kingdom.

Findings significant for the analysis of the influence of foreign workers on the labour market were provided by the British Migration Advisory Committee (2012), in which Labour Force Survey (LFS) data for the years 1975–2010 were used. Particular attention was paid to the impact of immigrants from EU member-states and third countries on the unemployment rate in the United Kingdom. The survey results ascertained that immigration from outside the EU had an impact on decreasing the level of employment in the years 1995–2010. At the same time, no statistical correlation was found between the influx of foreigners from EU member-states and the changing situation on the British labour market. They were unable to prove that the dynamic influx of the citizens of so-called 'new' member-states has had any impact on the fluctuations in the unemployment rate or on increased problems finding employment on the part of British nationals. Again, this was explained by educational level – immigrants from EU member-states were better educated than foreigners from third countries and this was factor from whence the difference in their impact on the labour market derived. Furthermore it was noted that the negative impact of migration on the level of British employment can be observed only in periods of economic slowdown. This means an overlapping of two processes – and it is extremely difficult to ascertain which of them is the more relevant.

The Polish literature on the subject lacks in-depth analyses showing the relationship with or the impact of the influx of foreigners on the Polish labour market. The only empirical study showing the correlation between the influx of Ukrainians in the years 2006–2010 and the situation of Polish workers was conducted by Klimek (2015). It results from his conclusions that, in the period discussed, no more than 4.5 per cent of employers dismissed at least one employee in order to take on an immigrant from Ukraine. His qualitative research showed that the replacement of a Polish worker with a foreign one was motivated by the quality and efficiency of the latter's work. It was also the case that Polish drivers refused to take their load of goods beyond the Eastern border.

Migration and its impact on the labour market should also be seen from the perspective of a dual labour market. The consequences of the increased presence of immigrants in a given labour market are likely to vary widely depending on the segment (Piore 1979). If in the so-called second, i.e. less attractive, labour market segment, where there is very high competition for vacancies, the influx of immigrants may result in increased unemployment. This means that, in the first segment, owing to the large number of vacancies, the employment of foreigners will be of a supplementary and complementary nature (Arak, Lewandowski and Zakowiecki 2014).

Most of the results presented here concern the situation in typical immigration countries (the USA, the United Kingdom and Germany, among others). They indicate that the impact of immigration on the labour market is ambiguous and varies depending on macrostructural factors in the countries of origin and destination

as well as on the individual characteristics of migrants. Namely, four main groups of contextual factors shaping the interrelations between the increased presence of foreigners and indicators of the destination-country labour market can be identified:

- the structure of the labour market in the destination country;
- the characteristics of the migrants themselves – in particular their level of education;
- the sectors in which migrants are employed – i.e. if they complement or substitute for native workers; and
- regulations in the field of labour law and immigration policies.

It can thus be argued that enriching a comparative perspective is of value for the topic studied. At the same time, analyses of the interrelations between the influx of foreigners and the labour market situation in new countries of immigration are scarce. An intensive influx of temporary workers from Ukraine after 2013, as well as the gradual depletion of Polish migratory stock, implies that Poland is more and more intensely transforming from a typical country of emigration into one of emigration–immigration.

Immigration to Poland and changes in the Polish labour market

In the last ten years or so, the Polish labour market has undergone major changes. The outcome of Polish accession to the EU has been significant and the consequences resulting from it have had a particular impact on the professional activity of Poles (e.g. Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008). In 2004 the labour market in Poland was characterised by the worst indicators of all the 24 EU member-states. The highest unemployment rate at 19.1 per cent (Eurostat 2017a), the lowest employment rate – 57.3 per cent (Eurostat 2017d) – and grossly disproportionate wage levels were the main factors pushing those of working age out of the country (Eurostat 2017c). A high flow of post-accession emigration, the tens of billions of euros in structural funds acquired for social and economic development in the years 2007–2015 and foreign investments, as well as an increase in expenditure on labour market policy, have all significantly contributed to the improvement in the domestic labour market (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012). It turns out that the new challenge for the functioning of the labour market lies in a shrinking and ageing labour stock – a consequence of overlapping negative demographic changes (Kielczewska and Lewandowski 2017). A decrease in the working-age population has caused employers to increasingly report problems connected with the acquisition of sufficient numbers of highly qualified and low-skilled workers. According to different forecasts, in 2050 the demand for additional labour resulting from demographic changes could reach from 5.2 million (Iglicka 2013) to 7.8 million (Fargues 2011). Since 2014, the level of unemployment has been below 10 per cent and a further regular decline has been observed. This is also reflected in GDP growth which, in the last decade, was above the average value for the EU-28. Projected changes related to a further decline in the working-age population and to a record low level of unemployment – together with a good economic growth outlook – have become essential reasons for opening up the market to foreign workers.

From the moment of Polish accession to the EU we can speak about greater interest in the Polish labour market, in particular among the citizens of post-Soviet republics. The principles on which labour immigration to Poland can take place can be divided into two fundamental types. The first is the free flow of citizens from other EU member-states; the second, the immigration of citizens of other countries who are obliged to obtain a permit to access the Polish labour market (OECD 2016). In the latter case several paths are possible. Definitely the most popular is either obtaining a work permit or pursuing employment based on an employer declaration that s/he has the intention to mandate the work to a foreigner. This instrument is flexible in nature. On the one hand, its introduction could bring about a swift effect in the form of an inflow of employees from third

states who thus enjoy facilitated access to the Polish labour market. On the other hand, its elimination or restriction (e.g. through the introduction of additional bureaucratic obligations for employees or employers) is likely to result in a very rapid reduction in the scale of immigration – which would, however, entail a high risk of growth in foreigners' employability in the grey economy. The current system of employer declaration is unique in Europe and allows for a quick reduction in shortages on local labour markets in periods of economic growth. In the case of growth in the level of unemployment or of economic downturn, its elimination would allow for a very speedy reduction in the scale of immigration. In this article we leave out immigration – the free inflow of citizens from EU member-states – and focus on the influx of foreigners who either obtained a work permit or pursued employment on the basis of an employer declaration. The reason for this approach is that labour immigration from third countries is several times higher than the influx from EU member-countries.

One structural feature of migration to Poland is its temporary character, which distinguishes Poland from other highly developed countries where long-term migration (over 12 months) prevails (Duszczyk and Matuszczyk 2016; Kaczmarczyk 2015b). According to data from the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, in 2004–2016, there was a significant increase in the number of work permits issued mainly for periods longer than 12 months – from over 12 000 in 2004 to 235 000 by 2017. A definite increase in foreign interest in employment on the Polish labour market is noticeable in the data on employer declarations of intent to employ a foreigner. Between 2007 and 2017 the number of declarations submitted grew from 21 000 to more than 1.82 million – an 87-fold increase (Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy 2018b). At the same time it should be clearly stated that the number of foreigners actually employed in the Polish labour market is markedly lower. For example, from previous research we can see that the percentage of actually realised declarations amounts to no more than 60 per cent (Duszczyk 2015). This difference results from the fact, *inter alia*, that migrants may obtain several declarations at the same time and that, having received such declarations, may decide not to go to Poland (Tyrowicz 2017). It should also be made clear that the ten-fold difference between the number of work permits issued in Poland and the number of employer declarations is consequent mainly on bureaucratic issues. Obtaining a work permit is still a lengthy process which includes a so-called labour-market test. There are no such restrictions in the case of employer declarations.

On the map of labour migration, the great interest in Poland is also confirmed by Eurostat data on the numbers of permits issued. Due to the intensive influx of immigrants after 2013, Poland has become one of the most frequently chosen destinations for labour immigration in the EU (Eurostat 2017b). Tyrowicz (2017: 16), however, points to the fact that immigrants are concentrated only in selected industries and regions of Poland.

Ukrainian citizens have remained the largest group of labour immigrants for more than ten years. Both the data regarding work permits and those connected with employer declarations show clearly the prevailing role of Ukrainians on the Polish labour market (Brunarska, Kindler, Szulecka and Toruńczyk-Ruiz 2016). They constitute about 80–90 per cent of the foreign labour force. This phenomenon of the prevalence of non-national workers of a single nationality cannot be observed in any other EU member-country, which again makes Poland exceptional (Górny 2017). The role of workers who enjoy the free movement of persons has been marginal until now. Immigrants in Poland usually find employment in sectors in the so-called secondary segment of the labour market – i.e. in construction, agriculture, manufacturing and domestic tasks. Interestingly a gradual increase in the share of foreigners in branches and sectors requiring high specialist qualifications can also be observed. More and more foreign workers find employment in basic sectors such as catering, cooking or retail sale, as well as in ICT and business (Kaczmarczyk 2015b). At the same time, there has been a steady rise in the percentage of businesses hiring foreign employees – in 2016 the share was 13 per cent (Gradzewicz, Saczuk, Strzelecki, Tyrowicz and Wyszyński 2016: 20). The inflow of immigrants into Poland also has

a positive effect on the social security system. Immigrants from Ukraine very rarely take advantage of social assistance (Duszczyk, Góra and Kaczmarczyk 2013) while, at the same time, they increasingly contribute to the pension system. According to data sourced from the Social Insurance Institution, the number of immigrants from Ukraine who paid social insurance contributions in 2017 increased by 50 per cent compared to 2016, reaching 440 000 (National Insurance Institution 2018). Therefore, the balance of payments both in and out is positive for the Polish system.

Results: the influx of immigrants and labour market indicators

Unemployment rate

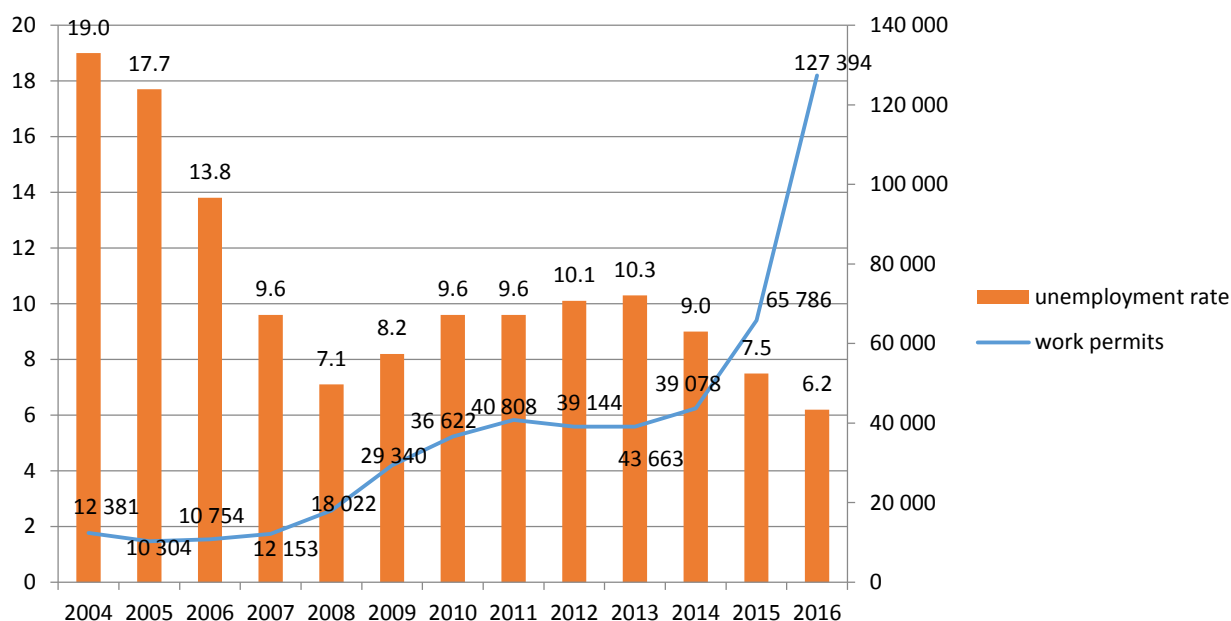
The essential and most often used measure in monitoring the situation in the labour market is the unemployment rate. As in other countries, in Poland there are two methods to measure this. The first is based on labour office registers, which contain details only for people who meet the national definition of ‘unemployed’. The second method is in accordance with global standards (International Labour Organisation and Eurostat), so its results can be compared with data pertaining to other countries (Kotowska, Matysiak and Strzelecki 2014). In order to ensure international comparability in this study we use the unemployment rate (the number of people unemployed as a percentage of the labour force) derived from the Labour Force Survey – i.e. calculated according to international standards. This allows for a direct interpretation without going into the intricacies of specific situations such as, for example, the case of persons obtaining the status of unemployed in order to receive health insurance, which can occur when registered unemployment indicators are used. Figures 1 and 2 concern, respectively, changes in the unemployment rate relative to the number of work permits issued between 2004 and 2016, and declarations of the intent to employ a foreigner which were registered with employment offices in years from 2007 to 2016. They show clearly that an increase in the number of foreign workers was accompanied by a decline in the unemployment rate in Poland. In the years 2004–2016 there was a moderate negative correlation between the unemployment rate and the number of work permits issued (the Pearson’s correlation coefficient equalled -0.58) (Figure 1). The correlation between the unemployment rate and the number of declarations issued was greater: the Pearson’s correlation coefficient amounted to -0.70 , which is strongly negative. In particular, in the period 2013–2016, the dynamic increase in the number of both work permits (Figure 1) and employer declarations (Figure 2) was accompanied by a visible decline in unemployment in Poland. In the earlier years (2008–2012), when unemployment in Poland was growing, the employment of foreigners was either diminishing (2011–2012) or remained at the same level. With the decline in the unemployment rate after 2014, the number of immigrants grew rapidly. Thus, the observation can be put forward that the influx of foreigners on the Polish labour market was of an accommodative character.

With respect to the numbers of foreign workers, in a short time, employer declarations have become the basic form of access to the Polish labour market for foreigners from third countries who are employed in seasonal work. In 2016 there were over 120 000 work permits issued, while the number of registered declarations exceeded 1.3 million. Even if the number of foreigners who actually came to Poland corresponded to only 60 per cent of registered declarations, as has already been mentioned, it was nevertheless six times greater than the number of work permits.

At the same time, a considerable number of foreigners working on the basis of an employer declaration stayed in Poland in the spring and summer only. This relates to the relatively high demand for seasonal work in this period, particularly in agriculture and construction, where immigrants from Ukraine frequently find

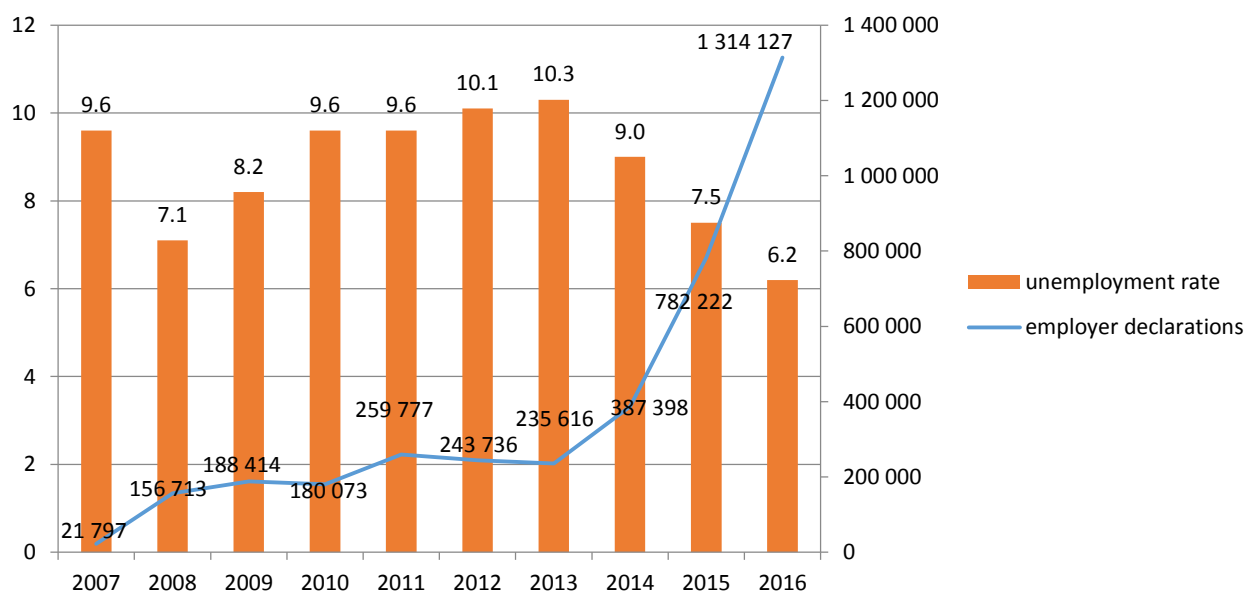
employment (Górny and Kaczmarczyk 2018). However, the more than five-fold increase in declarations registered in the years 2013–2016 was not enough to bring about a growth in seasonal unemployment among native workers. In fact, throughout that period, unemployment dropped dramatically in the summer months (CSO 2017a).

Figure 1. Work permits issued (right axis) and unemployment rate (left axis) in Poland, 2004–2016



Source: CSO (2017a) and Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018b).

Figure 2. Declarations submitted (right axis) and unemployment rate (left axis) in Poland, 2007–2016

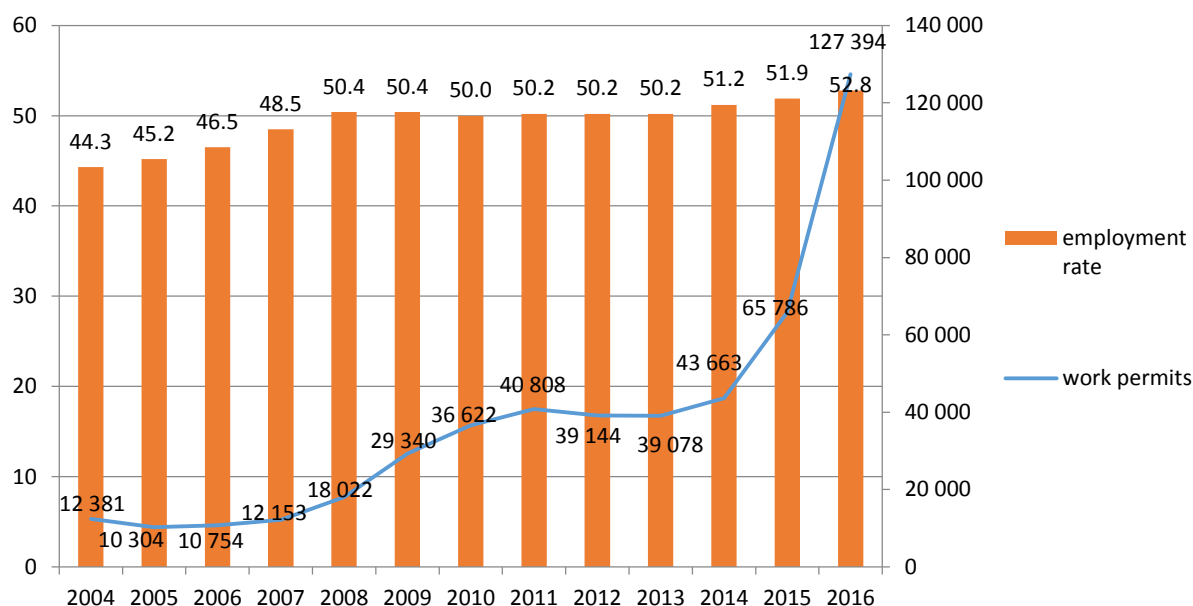


Source: CSO (2017a) and Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018b).

Employment rates

The employment rate, i.e. the percentage of people employed out of the total population, is another labour market indicator that deserves attention. An analysis of the relationship between this indicator and the numbers of work permits issued between 2004 and 2016 revealed a strong positive correlation (0.73) related to the growth of both indicators. These increases were particularly dynamic in 2013–2016 (Figures 3 and 4). Apparently, an increased population of foreign workers did not translate into the deactivation or displacement of native workers from the labour market, nor was the influx of foreigners significant enough to weaken other labour-market-related processes stimulating employment in the Polish economy (e.g. Tyrowicz 2017). Given the observed tendencies – the decline in the rate of unemployment accompanied by the growth in that of employment – we can argue that a significant influx of foreigners onto the Polish labour market since 2014 has not impeded the process of passing from unemployment to employment (Figure 3). Similar outcomes have been recorded in other countries experiencing, simultaneously, rapid economic growth and an influx of immigrants determined to pursue work (Dustmann *et al.* 2005; Kerr and Kerr 2011; OECD 2016). The great determination of foreign workers in Poland to find work is because immigrants from third countries, with a few exceptions, are not entitled to social welfare benefits and must therefore live on paid work. One could also argue that foreign workers complement rather than substitute for native workers in Poland.

Figure 3. Work permits issued (right axis) and the employment rate (left axis) in Poland, 2004–2016

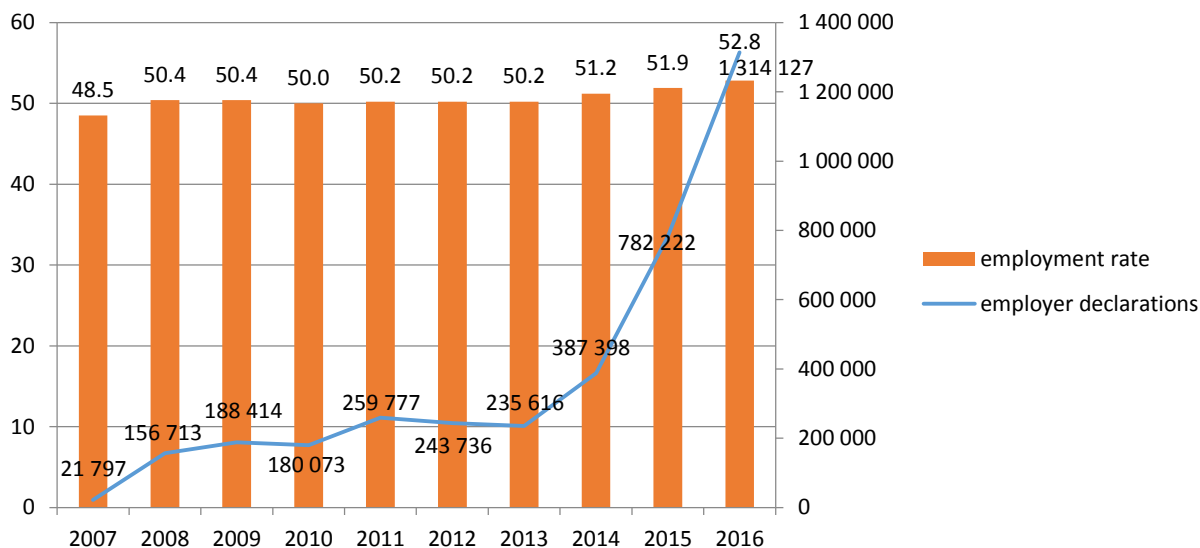


Source: CSO (2017a) and Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018b).

It should be stressed that the positive correlation between the employment rate and the number of declarations registered in 2007–2016 (0.91) was even stronger than for work permits (Figure 3 and 4). At the same time, some immigrants working on the basis of an employer declaration in Poland would like to be involved more permanently with the Polish labour market. In other words, they might be interested in an extension of their stay in Poland (Chmielewska, Dobroczyk and Puzynkiewicz 2016; Klimek 2015). We can thus risk the statement that such a process – i.e. the growing permanency of immigrants' employment – might take place in

Poland in the future if other factors do not change, particularly those connected with economic trends. Therefore, the problem of transforming seasonal foreign workers into a workforce employed for the entire year in Poland deserves the attention of policy-makers.

Figure 4. Declarations submitted (right axis) and employment rate (left axis) in Poland, 2007–2016

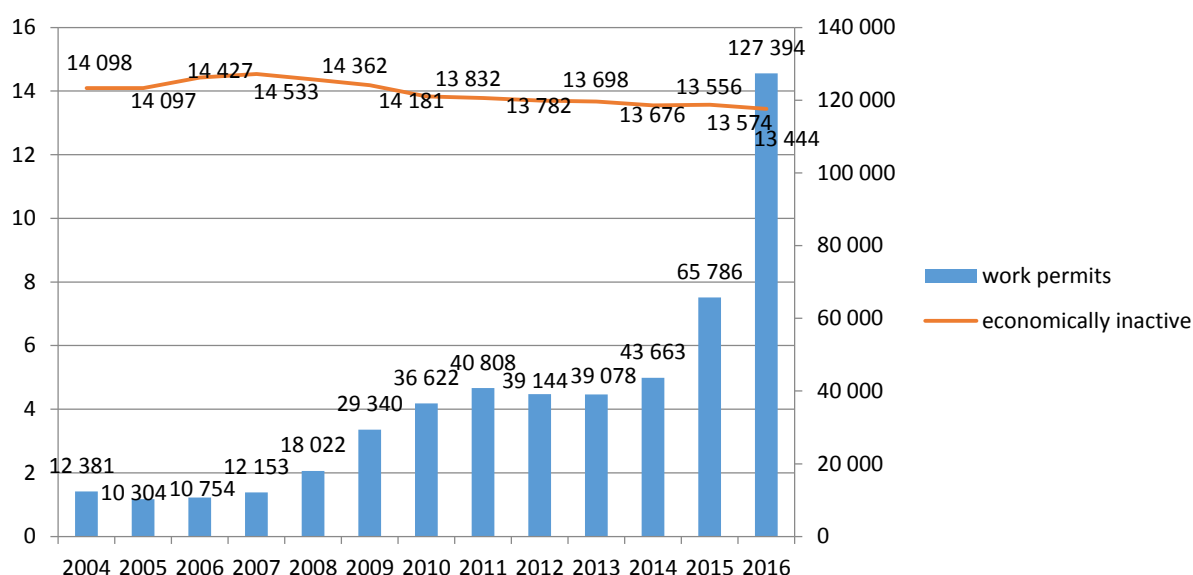


Source: CSO (2017a) and Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018b).

Economic inactivity

Another indicator for the situation on a labour market is the number of economically inactive persons. The influx of foreigners can result in increased difficulty, for natives, in finding a job and induce a higher probability that they will resign from further job searches. This may lead to people remaining unemployed for longer which, in turn, is likely to lead to negative social outcomes. These would include a deterioration of skills, resulting in increased difficulty in securing employment in the longer term (Angrist and Kugler 2003; Boeri and van Ours 2008). These processes usually contribute to the increase in the number of economically inactive people. The major factors underlying occupational inactivity include education level, retirement or housework (e.g. during parental leave); however, their impact on the level of economic inactivity is observed mainly in the medium and longer term. The mass inflow of foreigners, particularly that which took place in Poland in the years 2014–2016, may have a decisive impact on the level of economic inactivity of Poles in the short term. However, data relating to the influx of labour immigrants to Poland and the changes in the number of persons economically inactive in the country (Figures 5 and 6) show a different tendency. At that time, the increasing presence of foreigners on the Polish labour market was accompanied by a decline in the number of economically inactive persons in Poland. Such a relationship was particularly noticeable after 2010. For the entire period of this study, a strong negative correlation (-0.76) was observable between the number of economically inactive persons and the number of work permits issued. A negative correlation, not that much weaker (-0.67), was also noted between the number of economically inactive people and the number of declarations submitted in 2007–2016 (Figure 6).

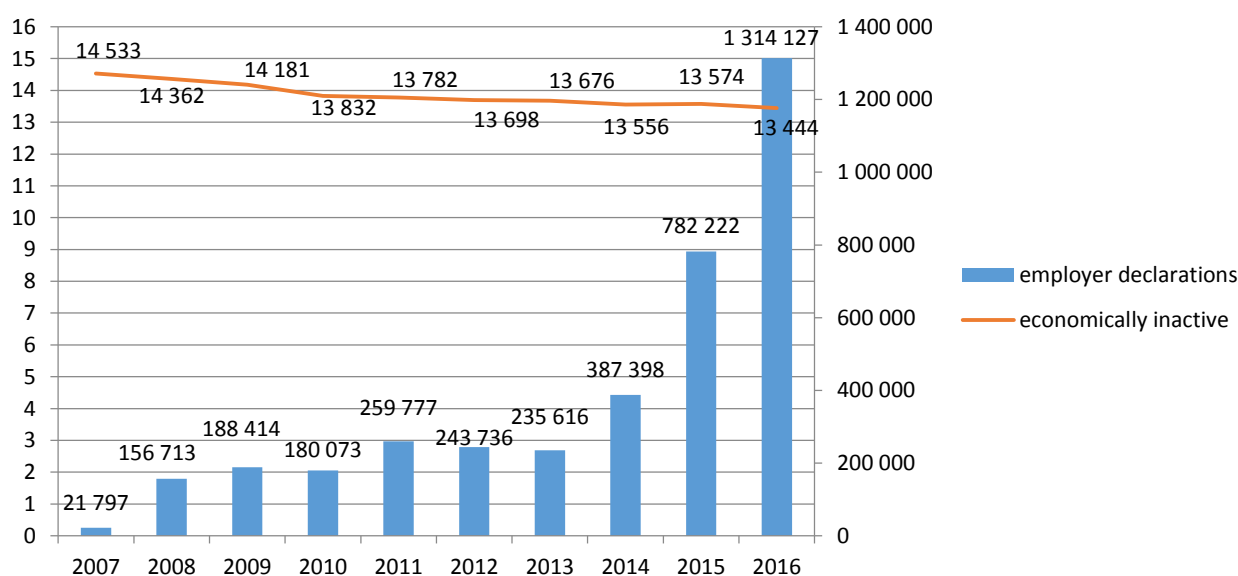
Figure 5. Work permits issued (right axis) and the economically inactive population in millions (left axis) in Poland, 2004–2016



Source: CSO (2017a) and Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018b).

Moreover, seasonally disaggregated data on economically inactive Poles indicate that, in spite of the dynamic increase in the influx of seasonal workers from abroad, the number of economically inactive Poles during the spring and summer months (i.e. when the largest group of immigrants are working in Poland) has not grown. This means that, in the period studied (presumably due to the economic boom and high emigration), the Polish labour market was capable of absorbing an increasing number of foreigners, including seasonal workers, without negative consequences for the economic inactivity of Poles.

Figure 6. Declarations submitted (right axis) and the economically inactive population in millions (left axis) in Poland, 2007–2016

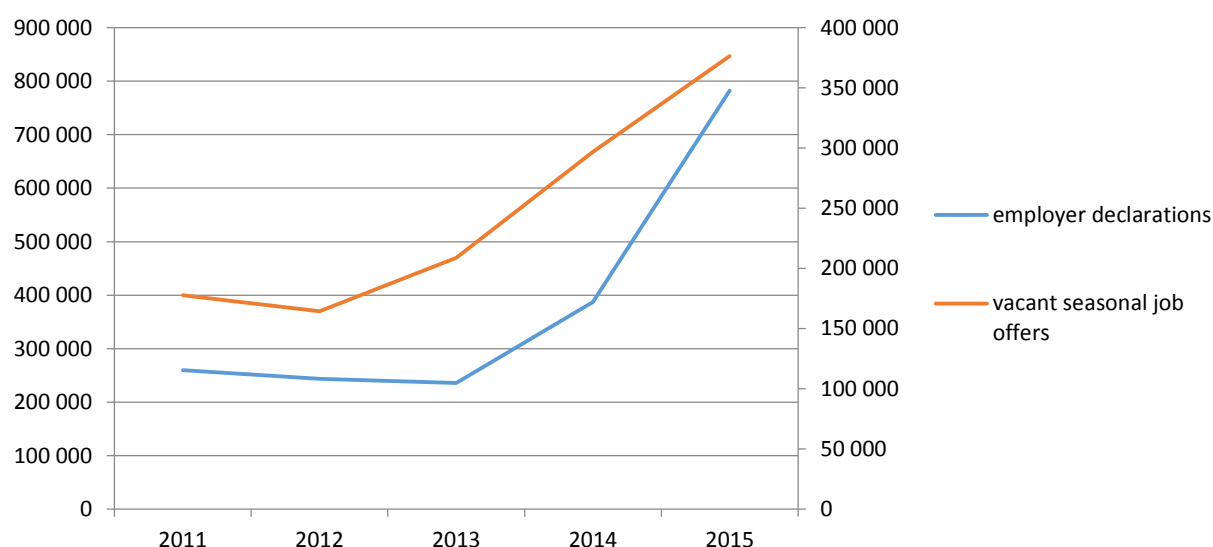


Source: CSO (2017a) and Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018b).

Seasonal job offers

Given that employer declarations – which constitute the main legal channel of entry into the Polish labour market for foreigners – are dedicated only to temporary employment, it is worth devoting some space to another indicator of the Polish labour market – seasonal job offers. The last part of our analysis relates therefore to interrelations between the increase in foreign seasonal employment in Poland (on the basis of employer declarations) and changes regarding job offers. From the data presented in Figure 7, it follows that the increase in the number of declarations registered coincides with an increasing number of vacant jobs in seasonal work – in 2011–2015 a very strong positive correlation (0.93) was observed between the two indicators. Presumably only some of the vacancies (but probably most of them) were filled by foreigners in Poland. Nevertheless, we can argue that the influx of foreigners on the Polish labour market did not worsen the situation of Poles looking for seasonal jobs.

Figure 7. Declarations submitted (left axis) and vacant seasonal job offers (right axis) in Poland, 2011–2015



Source: CSO (2017a) and Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018a).

Summary and conclusions

The main goal of the paper was to demonstrate the interrelations between the dynamic growth in the influx of foreign workers and changes on the Polish labour market. Between 2007 and 2016, Poland recorded an intensified influx of immigrants, particularly from Ukraine, an influx which was exceptionally dynamic in 2014–2016. This might have had negative outcomes for the labour market through a rise in the unemployment rate or a decline in that of employment. However, the analysis presented in this paper suggests that this negative scenario did not actually take place. On the contrary, the increased presence of foreigners on the labour market was accompanied by improvements in these labour market indicators. Data referring to changes in the unemployment rate suggest the complementarity of the employment of foreigners in the Polish labour market. In spite of an exceptionally rapid growth in the number of foreign workers in Poland (by as many as several hundred per cent) in 2014–2016, the unemployment rate dropped in this period. Nor did an increased influx of immigrant labour worsen the likelihood of Poles finding a job, as can be seen from the correlations between unemployment rate, employment rate and the dynamic increase in the influx of foreign workers in 2014–2016.

It should be stressed, however, that any tendencies revealed relate to the short-term perspective only. In the long run, for example, if economic trends change for the worse, then the interrelations between labour market indicators and foreign employment might look somewhat different.

An increase in the scale of employment of foreigners who mainly undertook seasonal work in Poland was accompanied by a growth in the employment rate in general, pertaining to both seasonal and permanent workers (CSO 2017a). The implementation of instruments allowing foreigners to change their seasonal employment into permanent should therefore definitely be recommended as this would help to stabilise their situation in the labour market without enhancing the risk of deterioration in the labour market. In this case, however, we must be aware of other factors, especially those of an endogenous nature such as, for example the structure of the labour market, the conditions of employment offered or workers' access to social services. It seems, nevertheless, that the stabilisation of the employment of foreigners already present in Poland (a transition from seasonal to more permanent employment) could be advantageous for the Polish labour market and therefore for the Polish economy overall. It can also contribute to a stronger attachment of foreign workers to the Polish labour market. Ukrainian citizens already enjoy freedom of movement (for tourist purposes only) within the EU. A further relaxation of the barriers of access to the EU labour market for them is not impossible. The more stable their situation on the Polish labour market, the less likely they are to go in search of jobs in other EU countries. Certainly, more stable working conditions for migrants also mean that it will be more difficult to stimulate their return migration in the face of an economic crisis, which is why many countries are not interested in transforming seasonal employment into permanent (e.g. Zimmermann *et al.* 2007).

This dramatic growth in the number of foreigners in the Polish labour market has also not translated into an increasing number of economically inactive persons in Poland, implying that the number of people who stopped looking for jobs and who remain passive has not grown in spite of increased competition for jobs between them and foreign workers. With some caution we can even argue that the influx of foreigners might have brought about *positive* impulses in the labour market – all other economic indicators being constant – thus contributing to the growth in the number of jobs (for native workers, too) and inducing a decline in the number of persons who are economically inactive.

It must be stressed, nevertheless, that an examination of the correlation between foreign employment and labour market indicators without analysing other economic factors impacting on the Polish economy, is not sufficient for the formulation of far-reaching recommendations. At the same time, the results of our analysis should be seen to provide very important information which might indicate the advisability of making some political decisions. For example, the correlations presented in the paper suggest that there is currently a need to maintain a liberal immigration policy in Poland. At the same time, if a further growth in the influx of foreigners is accompanied by growth in the unemployment rate, this would be an important – albeit not the only – sign that immigration policy should be changed into a more restrictive one. In such a context, one can affirm that the conclusions drawn from the analysis should therefore be taken into consideration when making decisions about migration policy and, in particular, the need to apply the so-called labour market test carried out by district employment offices before issuing work permits to citizens of third countries. This involves first ensuring that there is no Pole or citizen of the EU or an EEA member-state willing to take the vacant job. This leads to the conclusion that the application of this instrument should be considered as purely optional – for example, for use in a situation of growing unemployment. An additional argument supporting this approach is the lack of test material regarding declarations of intent. Ultimately both systems should be united but in such way that no advantages resulting from flexible solutions of immigration policy are lost and simultaneously that instruments of rapid reduction in the number of foreigners in the event of an economic downturn are retained. The test of the labour market could serve this purpose if introduced in specific situations and empirically confirmed – a sort of 'safety valve', not a constant element of immigration policy.

Notes

¹ This procedure includes citizens of Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine, who can all undertake employment without work permits for a period of 6 months in any 12 consecutive months.

Funding

This article is an output of the research project *In Search of Labour Market Security. Migration to and from Poland and the Attractiveness of the Polish Labour Market*, financed by the National Centre of Science within the framework of the OPUS programme (contract UMO-2014/15/B/HS5/01148).

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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How to cite this article: Duszczyk M., Matuszczyk K. (2018). The Employment of Foreigners in Poland and the Labour Market Situation. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* 7(2): 53–68.

Border Politics and Practices of Resistance on the Eastern Side of ‘Fortress Europe’: The Case of Chechen Asylum Seekers at the Belarusian–Polish Border

Marta Szczepanik*

While the number of forced migrants moving out of conflict-ridden or otherwise troubled regions into relatively stable and safe parts of the world is higher than ever, the countries of destination are increasingly trying to prevent migrants from reaching their territories. Given the scale of forced displacement and current trends of tightening immigration policies, it should be expected that tragedies at the borders, similar to that recently witnessed in Europe, will become the norm rather than the exception and that new discourses and practices will continue to emerge, transforming territorial borders in various parts of the world into highly conflictual and politicised ‘borderspaces’. This article is a contribution to the understanding of borders through a case study of the recent policy of ‘closed doors’ that Poland has adopted towards Russia’s North Caucasus asylum seekers at the country’s eastern border with Belarus, preventing them from entering the territory and claiming protection. It demonstrates that, through the process of ‘bordering’, power is no longer exercised only by the border guards at the crossing point in Terespol from where asylum seekers are being returned and that it is increasingly to be found in social practices that occur on both sides of the border, away from the clearance points. The article examines the various practices of resistance undertaken by the asylum seekers and other actors on several different levels in response to the changed reality at the border. It also analyses the meanings and discourses developed by Polish state actors in order to legitimise restrictive migration policies.

Keywords: border politics; Poland; Chechen refugees; borderscape; resistance

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Introduction

The journey across the Belarusian–Polish border is short, as the two border cities of Brest and Terespol are located only 13 km from each other. When the morning train reaches its destination in the small Polish provincial city of Terespol, travellers with European Union (EU) passports and Belarusian citizens are asked to proceed to passport control. Several hundred other individuals await their turn to talk to the border guards. Some try to explain that they cannot go back because their life is in danger; that they have been brutally interrogated, sometimes tortured, by the security forces back home in Chechnya. For many, the fact that the regime started targeting their underage children was the immediate reason to flee. Most of them ask for asylum but not everyone is given a chance to tell their story. Instead, some hear that they are economic migrants and, as such, will not be allowed to submit an application for international protection. Each day the officers let in a family or two – these are the ‘lucky ones’. Those refused entry are asked to board a train that will take them back to Belarus later the same day. They receive a document on which the border guards mark the reason for the refusal: ‘Lack of entry visa’. This is a common story, told by asylum seekers from Chechnya and other of Russia’s North Caucasus republics to journalists and NGOs arriving at the Belarusian–Polish border. The term ‘asylum seeker’ is used here to denote anyone who has expressed a wish to ask for protection, whether or not that person has been permitted to lodge an asylum claim, and the term ‘refugee’ to denote individuals granted protection by a state, while ‘migrant’ refers to non-citizens on the move for a variety of reasons, including to seek protection, to work or to reunite with family members. From around mid-2016, a growing number of reports spoke of Polish border guards denying asylum seekers the right to apply for protection at Poland’s eastern border (Brown 2016; Czubkowska and Potocki 2016; *Deutsche Welle* 2016; Kurczab-Redlich and Annanikova 2016; Nowak 2016). According to various estimates, between 1 500 and 2 000 people have been stranded for months in the border city of Brest, many of them vulnerable individuals such as children and victims of torture (Kurczab-Redlich and Annanikova 2016). However, with the world’s attention focused on the situation of migrants in the Mediterranean, the ‘invisible refugee crisis’ unfolding at the EU’s eastern border remained largely unnoticed by international actors.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the global number of forcibly displaced people is at its highest ever, reaching 65.6 million at the end of 2016 – a 300,000 increase on the year before.¹ On a global level, conflicts that cause large refugee movements – as in Somalia and Afghanistan, now in their third and fourth decade respectively – are lasting longer and new conflicts (in Syria, South Sudan, Yemen, Burundi, Ukraine and the Central African Republic) are occurring more frequently. At the same time, the rate at which solutions are being found for refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) has been falling since the end of the Cold War, leaving a growing number in situations of protracted displacement.

As a result, a little under 1 per cent of the today’s world population are forced migrants. While almost two-thirds of them (40.3 million) are IDPs – those who have left their place of residence but remain within the borders of the country – as many as 25.3 million refugees and asylum seekers reside outside their countries of origin. In 2016 alone, an estimated 3.4 million people have crossed an international border to seek protection. As forced migrants move out of conflict-ridden regions into relatively stable and wealthy parts of the world, the countries of destination are increasingly trying to prevent migrants’ arrival even before the latter reach their territories. Crossing an international frontier grants an asylum seeker access both to the territory in a physical sense and to the legal protection of certain rights, with *non-refoulement* – a principle that forbids states to return them to a country where they may face danger – as the essential part of those rights. More and more often, however, asylum seekers find their way blocked by sealed borders and emerging walls. Interestingly, as noted by Frelick, Kysel and Podkul (2016: 190), the very same countries that hold human rights in the highest regard and fully acknowledge protection obligations towards asylum seekers within their jurisdiction have simultaneously,

within recent decades, ‘established barriers that prevent migrants, including asylum seekers, from setting foot on their territories or otherwise triggering protection obligations’. This is the reality faced by people on the move at the US–Mexico border, on Australian shores and, finally, around ‘Fortress Europe’, which is gradually sealing off the routes that refugees and migrants take across the Mediterranean, along the Balkan route and – at the eastern border.

These significant developments on the ground have called for a critical reflection on the important role of borders as not only geographical but also political and sociological constructs designating spaces and processes of inclusion and exclusion. The blooming field of interdisciplinary border studies is concerned with examining a broad variety of issues related to migration, human rights, globalisation, economy, development, environmental degradation and social justice. Border studies contribute to a greater understanding of borders not only as sites where the political power of nation-states is being exercised in its purest form but also as sites of competing imperatives of securing the territory and protecting human lives (Pallister-Wilkins 2017) and, finally, as places where people on the move can be both victims of structural constraints and active agents determining their own migration faith (Brekke and Brochmann 2015; Dimitriadi 2015).

Although numerous flash points have recently emerged in Europe as result of tightening border control (e.g. in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, in Calais and on the Greek islands, to mention but a few), their description and analysis remain at the moment predominantly in the domain of the media and international political institutions. There is (as yet) relatively little research focusing on the micro-level of the struggles that occur in those flash points on a daily basis, on their various actors and the forms of power they exercise (one of the very few examples is Stierl’s work on migrants’ and activists’ resistance struggle at the EU sea borders; *cf.* Stierl 2014, 2016). This article addresses the issue of what and how meanings and practices are produced and how, in a border situation in which migrants in search of protection are prevented from entering a territory, they can be understood in the light of theoretical conceptualisations of borders. It deals with this question on the basis of a case study of Chechen asylum seekers denied entry to Poland at the Belarusian–Polish border. The main part of this research, which included participant observation and in-depth interviews, was conducted during a field visit to the Belarusian–Polish border crossing and was complemented by an analysis of legislation, media content and statistical data. The specific objectives pursued in this article are threefold: (1) to explore the process of admitting asylum seekers onto Polish territory and, in particular, how the policy restrictions are translated into the actual behaviour of the border guards and other actors; (2) to examine how the policy change is reflected in official political discourse; and (3) to identify the ways in which asylum seekers resist the constraints of a closed border. When using the term ‘closed border’ I refer to the restrictive policy of the Polish authorities towards the asylum seekers, which however, allowed, on the basis of unclear rules, a certain number of individuals to cross the border and lodge an asylum application. The scale of movements at the Polish eastern border, including the number of admissions and refusals of entry will be further explained in the text.

I look at the Belarusian–Polish frontier as a ‘borderscape’ – a political space charged with meanings, where practices of power are exercised and practices of resistance emerge in response. I argue that the process of ‘bordering’ has extended and ‘transposed’ the border as a geophysical site into social practices occurring both beyond the Polish territory (on the Belarusian side of the border) and within the internal political space. I also describe how, while pushing back asylum seekers in violation of legal and humanitarian commitments, Polish state actors have engaged in the production of meanings and discourses legitimising their actions. Such ‘bordering discourse’, including an extensive presence of ‘securitisation’ rhetoric and questioning of the legitimacy of asylum seekers’ claims, is definitely not new as such but has previously been somewhat uncommon in the Polish context. I also categorise several observed actions undertaken by asylum seekers in response to the policy of ‘closed borders’. I call them ‘practices of resistance’, by which I mean various forms of going beyond

the limits imposed by migration restrictions – for example, repeated attempts to cross the border, challenging the refusal of entry in legal ways or organising protests. I also include here resilience-building and sense-making practices developed within the Chechen community that help them to survive the difficult conditions at the border.

In the following sections I review selected theoretical approaches to borders as political spaces and to the problem of agency as exercised by forced migrants. I also present the analytical tools that help to better understand the forms of resistance undertaken by Chechen asylum seekers and the discursive strategies adopted by Polish state actors. Subsequently, I present my methods and data, the historical and sociological context of the ‘Eastern gate to Europe’ and the reasons why inhabitants of Chechnya continue to seek refuge in the EU. Finally, I arrive at the findings of the case study, where I address its specific objectives.

Politics and resistance in a migratory border context – theoretical perspectives

From borders to ‘borderscapes’

The intense growth of scholarly work in border studies in the first and second decades of the twenty-first century has been attributed partly to a ‘reaction to naïve, post-Cold-War “borderless” world discourses and partly to a “response to clarion calls of the late 1990s for more attention to borders as the sum of social, cultural, and political processes”’ (Johnson, Jones, Paasi, Amoore, Mountz, Salter and Rumford 2011: 61). This increase of interest came together with the realisation that the meaning of borders cannot be limited to demarcation lines on a map and physical barriers separating geopolitical territories. As noted by Étienne Balibar (2002: 84), borders are no longer (only) ‘at the border’ but, instead, they materialise ‘wherever selective controls are to be found’:

[B]orders are being both multiplied and reduced in their localisation and their function; they are being thinned out and doubled, becoming borders zones, regions, or countries where one can reside and live (...) [B]orders are no longer the shores of the political but have indeed become (...) objects – or – let us put it more precisely – things within the space of the political itself (Balibar 2002: 92).

Borders have increasingly been studied not only as a places but also as processes of ‘bordering’ (van Houtum 2005; van Houtum, Kramsch and Zierhofer 2005) where state sovereignty is exercised at great distances from the border line itself, both *beyond* and *within* the state territories, affecting various areas of social life (cf. Mezzadra and Neilsen 2013).

The constructivist approach to borders is also reflected in the concept of the ‘borderscape’, introduced by Suvendrini Perera (2007) and later taken up by Chiara Brambilla (2014). It is based on the assumption that borders are not given by nature but are, instead, ‘constantly being made’: socially produced and (re)defined. Attempting to detach the imagination of borders from its dominant ‘territorialist imperative’, ‘borderscape’ is used by analogy with the term landscape: ‘borderscapes’ provide borders with cultural meaning, dynamism and changeability as landscape provides land with a cultural framework (cf. Buoli 2015). As dynamic constructs, ‘borderscapes’ are shaped not only by an ensemble of laws and regulations but also by practices and discourses which, together, form spaces of ‘multiple resistances, challenges and counterclaims’ (Brambilla 2014). Importantly, connecting critical issues of state sovereignty with the question of justice and its limits, they constitute deeply politicised spaces. As ‘moral constructs rich with panic, danger and patriotism’ (Rajaram

and Grundy-Warr 2007), borders, along with immigration detention centres or refugee camps, therefore become spaces of feverish political contestation. In this paper, the notion of ‘borderscape’ serves as a conceptual lens helping to explain how a seemingly unimportant railway border crossing between Poland and Belarus (previously used by many migrants arriving in Poland) has become a highly conflictual site of refugee push-backs from the EU eastern frontier.

Spaces of control versus forms of transgression

The reflection on forms of social interaction occurring in the ‘borderscapes’ should be grounded in the understanding of a ‘particular structural politics of borders themselves as violent constructs that territorially prescribe processes of inclusion and exclusion’ (Pallister-Wilkins 2017: 87). The control of borders has traditionally been one of the most important mechanisms of governance through which states maintain sovereignty over the land by deciding who and what can cross their territorial space. Although the forms of exercising state authority at political borders are subject to constant changes –e.g. through the enactment of new physical barriers or the deployment of new technologies for border surveillance and the biopolitical control of movements (for specific case studies see Amoore 2006; Galdon Clavell 2017; Johnson *et al.* 2011; Warren 2013) – they invariably remain aimed at protecting the state against undesirable non-citizens. The governance of borders forms a regulative frame, a structure, within which – or contrary to which – transgression can occur. This transgression is largely a result of the agency of people on the move who respond to the constraints and, as in a feedback loop, also influence in return the practices of border making.

The structure versus agency antagonism is thus inherently incorporated in the study of migration and borders (Bakewell 2010; de Haas 2014; Hellgren 2012). Contrary to popular assumption, several studies have shown that forced migration does not exclude asylum seekers and refugees from exercising their agency and that, simultaneously, agency does not negate the need for refuge (for example: Brekke and Brochmann 2015; Dimitriadi 2015). The pursuit of protection can be complemented by the expectation that certain conditions and economic and social preferences will be met. Asylum seekers’ actions, in a given structural context, can be driven by both the need for protection *and* individual aspirations that often determine their decisions about means of transportation, choice of transit countries, length of layovers, etc. Faced with the reality of closed borders and other practices that aim to prevent migration, people on the move, of all legally ascribed categories, undertake various strategies to either circumvent or breach the physical, legal and social barriers. This may include a wide variety of actions that can be of either illegal, semi-legal or legal character – such as the use of smugglers’ services (see Crawley, Düvell, Jones, McMahon and Sigona 2016), forging documents, or marriages of convenience (see Charsley and Benson 2012) – as well as strategic planning (e.g. when migrants decide to refrain from immediate attempts to cross a border in anticipation of a future liberalisation of border controls or, on the contrary, when they accelerate the movement for fear of the closure of borders), using the assistance of NGOs (for legal advice, humanitarian aid), protests, hunger strikes, etc. Contestation may also include in-group solidarity (when migrants act for the benefit of the group of co-travellers) and reach within the territories of ‘fortified’ destination states, mobilising the support of their citizens against border regimes and immigration policies (see Cantat 2015).

It is in the context of this structure versus agency dialectic that I see the case of asylum seekers at the Belarusian–Polish border as a series of manifestations of migrants’ agency in response to a changed structural context. In this article I will call them ‘practices of resistance’. By this I specifically mean various forms of ‘going beyond the limits’ imposed by migration restrictions – i.e. individual and collective action undertaken by migrants in response to a refusal of their right to claim asylum and enter Poland. I adopt a Foucauldian understanding of resistance as a ‘counter-power’, implicated in the power structure and relations of inequality

in which those in weak positions (marginalised, excluded and ‘oppressed’) *question and object to* both the manifestations and the foundations of this structure (Foucault 1979; Pickett 1996). Such an approach leads me to see power as a central problem in migration dynamics; migration laws and politics of border protection are the primary instruments through which nation-states exercise their power over non-citizens. Foucault saw modern power as ‘ubiquitous, diffuse and circulating’ (Pickett 1996: 457–458), which is in line with what the authors of the term ‘bordering’ also attempt to convey: although power in the migration dynamics is primarily associated with the border, its manifestations are also to be found far from the border: in the ports of departure, in the waiting areas along the migration routes and in social practices occurring within a state. Also, for Foucault, just like modern power itself, the struggle against it must be ‘diffused’ and ‘localised’ (1996: 457–458).

Framing migration

As several authors have suggested, rethinking the role of borders through the study of ‘borderscapes’ serves to deconstruct the ‘interweaving between political practices of inclusion–exclusion’ and the ‘images created to support and communicate them on the cultural level by Western territorialist modernity’ (Brambilla, Laine, Scott and Bocchi 2015).

As noted by Pallister-Wilkins (2017), the conflicting interest of states, such as security concerns and humanitarian commitments resulting from legal obligations, are often entangled in border policies. Among the most important humanitarian commitments are the provisions governing the granting of international protection to individuals fleeing persecution and the explicit prohibition against returning them to a country in which they would be in likely danger. In policy terms, there are fundamental differences between the legal status and the treatment of voluntary and forced migrants who cross international borders. Although the dichotomy between voluntary and involuntary migration has increasingly been questioned in both academic (Richmond 1988, 1993, cited in Bakewell 2010: 1699) and practical contexts (cf. the UNHCR’s (UNHCR 2007: 8) and IOM’s (Cholewinski 2010: 6) use of the term ‘mixed migration’ to refer to ‘migrants and refugees increasingly making use of the same routes’ and ‘migration flows including the irregular nature of and the multiplicity of factors driving such movements and the differentiated needs and profiles of the persons involved’), together with practical difficulties related to the need to distinguish between those two groups, remain today at the core of the challenges faced by border officers in the field. The conflict between the need to recognise individuals in need of protection and the necessity of securing borders against the uncontrolled arrivals of migrants finds probably its most spectacular manifestation in the tragedies that unfolded in the Mediterranean during the recent migration crisis. In such complex situations, the various states may take an entirely different approach: from a generous invitation for the migrants to find refuge on the state’s territory to the sealing of the borders against the ‘invaders’. State governments wishing to restrict access to their territory often seek to provide interpretations and arguments justifying these policies. Because of the complexity and ambiguity of the migration phenomena themselves, they may relatively easily resort to selected convenient ‘images’ that support their case. This mechanism, described as ‘framing’ (Snow and Benford 1988; Snow, Rochford, Worden and Benford 1986), serves to construct and communicate the meaning behind certain processes and actions to a wider audience and, importantly, to reduce the ambiguity of intangible topics in such a way that the recipients can connect them to things which they know and understand. The concept of framing in this paper is used for my analysis of the interpretations that the Polish government used to justify the push-backs at the border.

Methods of data collection and analysis

This article draws mainly on the material collected during a four-day field visit to the Belarusian–Polish border that I conducted in early October 2016 in my capacity as a researcher on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (hereinafter: HFHR), a Warsaw-based NGO.² The aim of the visit, which included stays on both sides of the border in the cities of Brest (Belarus) and Terespol (Poland) as well as in the transit zone, was to uncover the general situation of asylum seekers in Brest who intended to apply for international protection in Poland and to observe the process of admission of asylum seekers to the Polish territory at the border crossing in Terespol. This fieldwork included participant observation at Brest railway station and at the border crossing point. I was accompanied by a lawyer who was responsible for investigating potential procedural violations and the possibility of taking legal action in support of asylum seekers denied entry to Poland (these findings are described in detail in the monitoring report). We travelled with a group of asylum seekers on the train connecting the two border cities and reported with them for the passport check procedure.

In addition to that, I conducted 16 in-depth interviews in Russian with North Caucasian asylum seekers (mostly Chechens) staying in Brest who had already made numerous unsuccessful attempts to file their asylum applications for international protection. Given the fact that most interviewees lived at the train station and due to the lack of other possibilities, most interviews were conducted on the station premises (e.g. in the waiting room, in the station's cafeteria, etc.). Although, each time, I attempted to ensure maximum privacy, many interviewees feared being interrupted or overheard. This fact might have negatively affected their trust and willingness to share their stories. None of interviewees agreed to me recording the interview, pointing to the fear of retaliation from Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov's security forces in case any individual details of their stories becomes known.

The main themes of the interviews included the reasons for the migrants leaving their countries of origin, their migration history and of their attempts to apply for asylum at the Brest/Terespol crossing point. About a dozen additional interviews were conducted with the representatives of NGOs, including the Belarusian human rights initiative 'Human Constanta' and the Polish International Humanitarian Initiative Foundation, independent Belarusian human-rights lawyers and volunteers providing aid to asylum seekers. These interviews concerned developments at the border, the histories of particular families and the efforts the organisations which undertook to assist them. I was also engaged in numerous conversations (in person, by phone and by e-mail) with Chechen asylum seekers and refugees in Poland who sought assistance from the HFHR for themselves or for relatives on the other side of the border.

The Belarusian–Polish border crossing is an example of a politically charged and conflictual research scene where a researcher 'seeks understanding across and within the structures of powers and domination' (Armbruster 2008). At such a site, researchers must be particularly attentive while positioning themselves within the research environment and design, locating potential influence on the study and recognising the impact on subjects and the data presented (Chiseri-Strater 1996). During the data collection process, I was positioned in the double role of researcher and human rights defender. Although the immediate aim of the field visit was not to provide direct assistance but to investigate the problem, the data collected were later to become a substantive basis for advocacy efforts. The fact that I represented the HFHR, an NGO that has been known to provide aid to refugees in Poland, gained me both the trust of interviewees and their expectation that would I somehow put an end to the situation perceived by them as a systemic injustice. This combination of the two roles was difficult both methodologically and emotionally: my position influenced the study setting (e.g. through working under time pressure for a quick delivery of results) and might have also affected the way in which personal histories were presented to me. Most refugees' accounts began with stories of injustice, violence, suffering and

loss in North Caucasus, culminating in the description of rejection at the border followed by, often non-verbalised, expectations that a remedy for this situation could be found, which was not immediately possible. In order to separate the data collection process from legal aid provision and to avoid deception, I clearly stated the purpose of the interviews and referred interested interviewees to a Belarusian NGO which became specialised in handling legal matters at the border. As argued by England (1994: 84–85), a researcher in the field is an ‘instrument’ and ‘positioned subject’ with his or her own biography, personal history and lived experience as well as a social and historical location. I represented an organisation mandated with the protection or rights of migrants and a citizen of a country whose authorities’ decision my interviewees contested. Through its design and context – the fact that the monitoring visit was conducted primarily for the purpose of examining the cases of non-admission to the Polish territory and the asylum procedure (no interviews were conducted with persons who had successfully applied for asylum in Terespol and entered Poland) – this research was, from the beginning, aimed at intervening ‘on the side of the oppressed’, a fact that my interviewees were well aware of. I acknowledge that this might have influenced how they told me their stories as they saw me as a compassionate interlocutor with a certain power to impact on the situation (e.g. through later advocacy efforts). While talking to me, interviewees could have been interested in, for example, stressing the forced character of their migration and the large scale of perceived injustice at the border. The data collected, as well as the conclusions I draw in this article, must therefore be seen in the context of my positionality within the research environment.

While acknowledging this fact, in this article I also try to present my findings in a broader migratory context. For example, I have juxtaposed the information and observations collected during the visit with statistical data provided by Polish institutions on the number of accepted asylum seekers and decisions on the refusal of entry. This information was acquired from the Office for Foreigners, which as an authority responsible for examining asylum claims in Poland and from the border guard headquarters. In addition, I looked at the political discourse in Poland, analysing several public addresses, in such as television and radio interviews, of high-ranking Polish officials, that pertained to the question of asylum seekers at the eastern border in order to look at the way in which they describe and explain the situation. I also participated in several official and unofficial conversations with the representatives of the Polish border guards, Belarusian law enforcement services, migration authorities and journalists.

An eastern gate to Europe: new phenomena on an old migration route

Refugees from Russia’s North Caucasus republics transiting through Belarus on their way to Poland and the eastern border of the European Union in order to apply for international protection are not a new phenomenon. Ever since Poland signed the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the status of refugees in the early 1990s, Russian citizens have represented one of the largest groups of asylum seekers in the country and their number has gradually grown (to up to 90 per cent of all applications in 2004–2008). In subsequent years, this proportion changed due to the emergence of new groups of forced migrants seeking protection in Poland: Georgians (2008–2009) and Ukrainians (since 2013) fleeing military conflict in their countries. In 2016, 8 992 Russian citizens applied for asylum in Poland (out of the total number of 12 320 applicants). In 2015, 2014 and 2013 there were 7 992 (out of 12 325), 4 112 (8 193) and 12 849 (15 253) applicants with Russian passports respectively. It is important to note that, in general, the number of asylum seekers in Poland is relatively small and that the average total number of asylum applicants in the last 10 years has not exceeded 10 000 per year.³ Thus, the scale of forced migration to Poland, most of which occurs at the Polish eastern border, is relatively small compared to the number of arrivals by sea along the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes.⁴ Another important aspect characterising forced migration to Poland is its transitory nature – the fact that many

applicants do not stay but move to other EU countries. For example, in the period from 2013 to 2016, around 70 per cent of Russian asylum seekers' cases were discontinued; a significant part of these cases may be discontinued due to the absence of the applicant on Polish territory, however, the exact number of persons who leave the country remains unknown. .

The vast majority of applicants of Russian nationality are persons originating from North Caucasus republics, especially Chechnya, as well as Dagestan and Ingushetia. Official statistics also show clearly that the overwhelming majority of applications for international protection are lodged at the border crossing point Brest–Terespól, meaning that most asylum seekers arrive in Poland through the eastern border with Belarus.

The most important factors determining the presence of numerous forced migrants from the Caucasus in Poland are geopolitical. Poland is seen as the first 'safe country' on the way from the East to the West and, in the past, i.e. during and immediately after the First and Second Chechen Wars (separatist military conflicts, occurring in 1994–1996 and 1999–2009 respectively), it granted protection to a number of Chechen refugees. Today, Poland, as well as Germany and Austria – which is where many Chechens head to after lodging an application in Poland – are home to a relatively large Chechen diaspora.

The spatial arrangements at the Brest–Terespól border crossing, as well as certain practices of border governance, also seem to explain why this particular crossing is popular among asylum seekers. Citizens of the Russian Federation may stay in Belarus without a visa or the obligation to register, for up to 90 days,⁵ therefore they do not need to be afraid of being apprehended by Belarusian law enforcement services if they are not admitted by Poland on their first attempt. Furthermore, observation shows that, as a rule, the Belarusian border service in Brest does not prevent asylum seekers from boarding the train headed to Terespól, in spite of their lack of a Schengen visa.

Notwithstanding this seemingly neutral stance of the Belarusian authorities towards asylum seekers from Chechnya, these latter rarely consider staying in Belarus permanently. They point to the general feeling of insecurity and lack of protection from a state which is an important political ally of Russia. One interviewee noted:

How can we stay in Belarus? Russia and Belarus – it is one political, security and customs union... The local FSB (Federal Security Service, Russian: Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti) knows everything about us and, at any time, they can pass this information to the FSB in Chechnya.

It should also be noted that there were no Russian citizens among the 210 individuals granted refugee status in Belarus in 2004–2016 (while the number of Russian applicants in the same period was 73),⁶ meaning that the actual likelihood of their receiving legal protection in Belarus is close to none.

As reported by international organisations – and despite the official end of the war – Chechnya, under the Kremlin subordinate Ramzan Kadyrov, remains a deeply troubled place with widespread human rights violations and the systemic use of violence against the civilian population (Amnesty International 2016; Human Rights Watch 2016; Memorial Human Rights Centre 2016). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, aiming to relieve Russian troops, the Kremlin handed over responsibility for the conflict in Chechnya to the Chechens – a policy which, in political science terms, has been described as 'Chechenisation' (Nichol 2007; Ware 2009, 2013). While a full political landscape of Chechnya and North Caucasus more broadly is too complex to present in this paper, experts generally agree that the instauration of the Kadyrov regime has turned a separatist war with Russia into a frozen internal conflict, where 'peace' is kept in the republic at the expense of civil rights. One of the characteristics of the Chechen regime's *modus operandi* is the constant production of internal enemies, exercised through the common use of collective responsibility for real or alleged involvement in the underground resistance movement or charges of 'extremism'.

Given the current situation in Chechnya, it seems reasonable to assume that the root causes of the arrival of forced migrants in Europe have not ceased to exist. What have changed are, rather, the reception policies of EU countries, including Poland, towards refugees. Around mid-2016, numerous reports appeared indicating a possible large-scale push-back policy carried out by Polish border guards at the border crossing in Brest–Terespol. The Polish Commissioner for Human Rights, Belarusian and Polish rights groups as well as the Human Rights Watch carried out monitoring missions to investigate the problem (Chrzanowska, Mickiewicz, Słubik, Subko and Trylińska 2016; Commissioner for Human Rights 2016; Human Rights Watch 2016; Human Rights Watch 2017). Their findings confirmed that the border guards indeed refuse to admit a number of persons asking for asylum in Poland; however the reports varied with regard to the scale of the push-backs. These differences could be attributed, *inter alia*, to the methodology used and the access to the procedure that was granted to a given monitoring institution (e.g. only representatives of the Commissioner are allowed to observe the cursory interviews that officers conduct with asylum seekers). In addition to numerous individual complaints and monitoring reports, the dramatically increasing number of decisions issued by border guards which deny asylum seekers entry to Polish territory may also indicate that the latter's non-admission to the refugee procedure is a deliberate policy.⁷

The Belarusian–Polish frontier as a ‘borderscape’

A site of inclusion and exclusion

In line with European and international laws (above all, with the principle of *non-refoulement*), Polish law currently provides that an asylum seeker has the right to enter Polish territory when applying for international protection despite a lack of documents allowing entry (e.g. visa or residence card). According to the Act on foreigners, if a foreign national explicitly expresses an intention to seek international protection, the possibility of a refusal of entry based on the absence of a valid visa is excluded.⁸ The border guards are responsible for registering an application and for passing it, within 48 hours, to the Head of the Office for Foreigners, which is an administrative body responsible for substantive examination applications and for granting or refusing protection.⁹ The role of the border guard is therefore limited to the registration of applications and excludes the right to decide on their merits. From a formal point of view, only an application submitted on a specially designated form, filled in by the officer, effectively starts the procedure for international protection.

What emerges from the interviews conducted and from independent monitoring reports is that the border guards at the crossing often ignore the intention to submit an application for asylum by ‘not hearing’ the asylum seekers’ claims or words spoken, such as ‘refugee status’ (Russian: *status bezhenca*) or ‘asylum’ (*ubezhishche*). Asylum seekers stuck at the border reported that, despite their repeated, explicit requests for protection, in which they invoked the fear of persecution in the country of origin, officers refused to accept the application, referring to the lack of a visa. Only two or three families a day are allowed through the border; however the criteria on which officials decide to accept their applications are unclear. Interviewees spoke about an ambiguous selection process and random rules at the first cursory interview with the officers:

We all say that we fear the return to Chechnya. But they don't really listen to us. There are no rules and you don't know what to expect. We have seen families attempting 30 times before they were let in and – just as often – families who crossed the border at first attempt. It's like roulette.

The process of selection starts on the Belarusian side of the border. While purchasing tickets for the train to Terespol, Chechens are assigned seats in the last carriages, while EU and Belarusian citizens get seats in the first or second ones. For this reason, we decided not to approach the ticket counter ourselves but, instead, to ask a Chechen family to buy tickets for us so that we could sit with them on the train. In the opinion of interviewees and experts on the ground, this ticket-selling practice amounted to racial profiling, as those who look 'white' were separated from the asylum seekers, supposedly to 'facilitate' the future management of passenger flows at the destination station. Asylum seekers were also only sold return tickets costing 18 Belarusian rubles (approximately 8 euros) per person, which made repeat journeys an expensive enterprise for Chechen families, with their often three to eight children. When asked about the reason why they cannot buy a one-way ticket to Terespol, an interviewee said: 'They just wouldn't sell it to us'. Asylum seekers' unsuccessful attempts to act outside of the 'script' by asking to buy a one-way ticket could suggest that the ticket-selling officers somehow assumed that most asylum seekers would need return tickets as they were not going to be let through the border. What recurred in many interviews was a conviction that there was an 'agreement' between the Polish and the Belarusian border services as well as with the administration of the railways – a supposition which we were, unfortunately, unable to verify. Interviewees showed bundles of validated train tickets for the Brest–Terespol–Brest route, which proved their numerous attempts to enter Poland, as well as numerous documents and/or passport stamps showing the refusal to allow them to cross the border, all confirming that they had been denied entry. A Chechen interviewee who spoke about the economic cost to many Chechen families who, tirelessly, board the train every day in the hope of being allowed to enter Poland, noted bitterly: 'The party that surely benefits the most from this situation is the Belarusian railway company'.

The separation of travellers into categories which takes place at the station in Brest is one example of how the process of 'bordering' moves the function of the border (which is one of exclusion or inclusion) from the geophysical site (the border crossing station) to a social practice (the ticket-selling process) outside Polish territory. Apart from management requirements, segregation of passengers may serve to ensure the invisibility of those border guard practices that violate international law. As in Terespol, passengers alight from the train carriages one after the other starting from the first carriage; asylum seekers get off last. This way they are usually the only group of travellers in the underground passage connecting the platform with the passport control desks, where they tell the border guards that they want to apply for asylum. We were not allowed to pass the border control together with the asylum seekers with whom we travelled and were ordered to leave by a separate exit. Asylum seekers who were refused admission to the refugee procedure were returned to Belarus on the next train. The segregation practices that occur both before and after the asylum seekers board the train to Terespol are examples of the 'diffuse power' that disperses the responsibility for the illegal actions of the Polish migration authorities. Such spatial arrangements, combined with the denial of access to the border crossing to independent monitors (in particular to the place where the border guards conduct the initial interviews with the newly arrived),¹⁰ contribute to the creation of a grey zone in which the power of international and domestic laws becomes (temporarily) suspended and, in Agambenian terms (1998), asylum seekers' existence becomes reduced to 'bare life', stripped of political significance in the sense of that it refuses them the possibility to exercise their rights as subjects of legal protection regimes. For, from the legal point of view, the status of an 'asylum seeker' is not declaratory but depends on the formal recognition of an agent of structural power (the border service). In other words, a person becomes an asylum seeker under Polish law when a border guard writes down the former's testimony on the application form. While the law obliges the border guards to accept an application from anyone who declares that they seek protection, on the ground, however, it is the physical act of the guards writing down the asylum seekers' words that triggers obligations of protection.

A bordering discourse

Representatives of the Polish government have, on several occasions, officially commented on the situation at the border, mostly in response to journalists' questions about whether and why Poland has 'closed its doors' to refugees. The Minister of the Interior and Administration addressed these questions, *inter alia*, during interviews on Polish television (TVN24 2016) and radio (Tok.fm 2016). Polish politicians have also spoken about the situation at the border with foreign media (*Deutsche Welle* 2017) and at the European Parliament (*Polish Prime Minister's Address to the EU Parliament of 19 January 2016*). In analysing these materials, I was interested in learning how this restricted access to Polish territory, in violation of international and national laws,¹¹ was 'framed', explained and justified before the Polish and international public.

As a rule, government officials admitted that Poland had, indeed, restricted the access of 'Muslim immigrants' to the territory, presenting this new policy as a legitimate approach to the question of immigration. This narrative included a 'securitisation' rhetoric pointing to the threats connected with uncontrolled immigration. The Polish Minister of the Interior and Administration announced during radio and television interviews (Tok.fm 2016; TVN24 2016) that, as long as he remains in power, he will not allow for the formation of a 'new Muslim migration route' through Polish territory and will not expose Poland to the threat of terrorism. He described the Polish border as completely 'sealed' or 'air-tight' and mentioned that Polish border guards, in addition to being responsible for the Polish frontier, are also deployed in other EU countries to help protect their borders. The Minister has framed the arrival of Chechens in the border area as an attempt to 'test new routes' to Europe by Muslim immigrants from Africa and the Middle East whose presence had previously led to terrorist attacks and the creation of 'Sharia districts' in Western Europe. This interpretation certainly aimed at seeking wider public support through the establishment of an emotional connection between the situation at the border and the threat of terrorism exclusively; the humanitarian aspect of it – the fate of the people – was almost completely absent. This kind of framing left little space for consideration of solutions that would take both aspects into account – the sealing of the border appeared to be the only choice.

Alongside these efforts to present asylum seekers as a threat, Polish officials simultaneously questioned the legitimacy of Chechens' asylum claims and the legal commitments that Poland may have towards them. The Minister of the Interior and Administration referred to the fact that, as the war in Chechnya had ended, its inhabitants should no longer be considered 'genuine refugees', thereby connecting the legitimacy of protection claims not with persecution but with an ongoing military conflict in the country of origin. This understanding differs from the definition of 'refugee' as formulated in most asylum laws today which, based on the UN 1951 Refugee Convention definition, bind the understanding of its essence with a 'well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion'.¹² Finally, at both international and domestic levels, government representatives took an approach that could be described as a 'rejection of commitments on the basis of other commitments'. While speaking to the European Parliament in January 2016, the Polish Prime Minister said that her country had accepted 'one million Ukrainian refugees' and this should also be counted as an answer to Europe's migration problem (*Polish Prime Minister's Address to the EU Parliament of 19 January 2016*). This argument was repeated by the Minister of Finance during an interview for the German broadcaster *Deutsche Welle* (2017). While it is unclear whether it was unintentional or deliberate, this confusion of the terms 'refugee' and 'migrant' presented Ukrainian economic migrants as 'refugees' – even though the actual number of Ukrainians granted international protection in Poland remains at an extremely low level.¹³

Interestingly, Polish state actors also sought to connect the problem of their treatment of asylum seekers to the conflict between national and EU interests that has been increasingly present in the Polish public debate following the change of government in 2015. In a process described by Snow *et al.* (1986) as 'frame-alignment'

or, more precisely here, as one of its four forms – ‘frame-bridging’ – a linkage was established between the country’s restrictive migration policy and the Polish government’s more general antagonism towards the ‘Brussels elites’ and other political forces. The Minister of the Interior and Administration explicitly presented the Polish approach as a departure from the ‘harmful open door policy’ pursued by the EU and the former Polish government (now in opposition) (Tok.fm 2016; TVN24 2016).

The discourse adopted by Polish state actors is not new or original as such; the fact that states seek to legitimise their actions by promoting discourses that support them is an integral part of stricter immigration policies everywhere. However, this kind of discourse has previously (in the years preceding the ‘migration crisis’) been somewhat uncommon in the Polish context. It was related not only to the fact that Poland, generally, admitted asylum seekers to its territory but also that migration was not a matter of public debate. It is also clear that the narrative of Polish authorities concerning asylum seekers is entangled in broader international and domestic political debates that are beyond the scope of this article.

The example of the framing of the situation at the border in a political language serves here, however, to show how the process of ‘bordering’ transposes the physical separation, which is the primary function of the border, into processes occurring within society. For, as argued by Balibar (2004: 109) borders no longer exist only ‘at the edge of the territory’ but have been multiplied and ‘transported into the middle of political space’. They bring about new or reanimate old political divides – between the current and the former government, the Polish and the EU ruling elites, citizens and non-citizens and ‘refugees’ and ‘migrants’. In the political space, they generate conflicts, emotions and narratives of exclusion and inclusion, becoming what Paasi (2012: 2307) calls ‘discursive/emotional landscapes of social power’.

Practices of resistance

The situation at the border provoked a series of responses by various actors who questioned and resisted the policy of closed borders. Asylum seekers typically tried to ‘test out’ different approaches to the border guards. As many families undertook multiple attempts to cross the border, they became familiar with some of the border guards, whom they attempted to address specifically. For example, one interviewee said:

There is this officer... he has a kind look in his eyes. So I tried to talk to him and I was careful not to raise my voice, cry or make him angry. I was talking to him softly, asking him to understand our situation, to show mercy. But this didn't help either.

However, the practices of resistance were not merely the asylum seekers’ repeated attempts to cross the border but also included the efforts that resorted to the different power levels at play here. Just as the border crossing became a site of multiple forms of power exercised by traditional structural agents or delegated to other parties, so the counter-practices also took the shape of multiple ‘diffused resistances’, put up at different levels.

In mid-2016, representatives of a Minsk-based human rights NGO, Human Constanta, arrived in Brest, alarmed about the growing number of Chechen asylum seekers pushed back from the Polish border. They further engaged in the provision of legal and humanitarian aid, which eventually resulted in the opening of a sub-office in early 2017. Soon, the asylum seekers engaged in a political form of resistance, when a demonstration was organised in Brest in August 2016 with about 150 Chechens protesting their non-admission to Poland (Chołodowski 2016; Karney 2016). The protest was soon peacefully ended by the Belarusian law enforcement services but Polish and Belarusian media reports also triggered the interest of Russian and European journalists.

On the Polish side, human rights groups working on refugee rights have appealed to the Polish government and supranational institutions, such as the UN and EU human rights bodies, to draw their attention and demand a reaction to the problem of denial of access to asylum.¹⁴ Several organisations have conducted monitoring missions and released public reports. Some have established temporary missions in Brest, where volunteers provide psychosocial support and humanitarian aid (that includes, amongst other things, the collection of winter clothing for asylum seekers in Warsaw and Minsk). NGOs have also tried to mobilise the support of Polish citizens through advocacy efforts (e.g. the creation of an online petition to the Ministry of the Interior and Administration) and taking part in public events where the socio-political situation in Chechnya is discussed. While it is hard to evaluate the impact of such actions in terms of awareness-raising, it was clear that the advocacy efforts to bring the problem of legal violation to the attention of decision-makers had little influence on the practices of the border guards, which was a quite early signal that the situation required not only a change of practice of the personnel on the ground, but a change of wider policy (a fact later confirmed in officials' public statements). It also seemed evident for the human rights activists that, in the public discourse in Poland and abroad, the situation at the Polish border remained overshadowed by, on the one hand, the acute humanitarian situation in the Mediterranean and, on the other, by the fear of terrorism associated with Muslim refugees.

Another type of resistance was put up at the legal level which centred around efforts to challenge the situation at the border within the framework of the existing legal regime. Employees and volunteers of various organisations offered support to Chechen families by accompanying them on the train going to the border. They also helped them to prepare the documentation of their experience in Chechnya (e.g. medical reports confirming beatings or torture, summonses to reports to law enforcement institutions, etc.) and arranged specific services (e.g. psychological consultations). They prepared written statements on behalf of the asylum seekers which were then handed to the officers at the border, so that they had to consider their content before refusing to accept an application. Volunteers also helped to write appeals against the decisions to refuse entry. Making use of the assistance of NGOs showed that these entities disposed of certain leverage mechanisms that could help asylum seekers 'present their case' at the border. While migrants were still dependant on border guard decisions, legal support made it more difficult for the latter to automatically dismiss a claim, as officers had to respond not only to them but also to persons with the high legal competence enabling them to question the decisions. These attempts, at the beginning unproductive in most cases, become partially successful in subsequent months when the NGOs in Brest became familiar with Polish immigration provisions and started to work on a more systematic basis. Many asylum seekers, mostly victims of torture and other vulnerable cases, were eventually let in thanks to NGOs' efforts. In March 2017, asylum seekers were also supported by a group of advocates from the Warsaw Bar Council who engaged in the provision of *pro bono* legal aid (*Polsat News* 2017). The resistance described at the legal level is also an example of the mobilisation of actors who had not been previously active in supporting asylum seekers. The example of the Warsaw Bar Council is particularly noteworthy as, by engaging in the provision of assistance at the border, the advocates not only made use of their professional competences but, on a more subtle symbolic level, their status as a respected social group served as the legitimisation of asylum seekers' position and helped to frame the situation as unlawful and unjust.

A distinct group of resistance practices was aimed at mitigating the consequences of closed borders through building resilience among those who could not return to Chechnya and remained stranded in Brest with an unclear future ahead. Social and psychological assistance provided by qualified volunteers in Brest helped them, to a certain extent, to make sense of the experience of liminality that resulted from the deadlock at the border. The humanitarian and psychological aspects of the lengthy stay in the border area, with its unclear prospects and, for many, with no possibility of return, had a particularly heavy impact on the children. In

October 2016, several large Chechen families with around 30 children in total were living in the waiting room at the station, without access to education, proper healthcare, sanitary facilities or nutrition – a scene that particularly moved volunteers and journalists on their first arrival there. Volunteers engaged in organising outdoor and indoor activities and games that particularly engaged this group of children. On the one hand, this often served the purpose of granting some ‘free time’ to the parents, who could buy groceries or consult a lawyer while their children were under the care of volunteers. On the other, as explained by one of the activists who came daily to the station to spend time with the children, certain activities, such as drama games or drawing, enabled children to express their emotions and cope with often traumatic experiences. These experiences originated not only from Chechnya but also from Brest and the border crossing, where children witnessed their parents’ humiliation and helplessness as they attempted to cross the border. Among the most popular role-plays was one called ‘the bad and the good border guard’.

Practices of in-group solidarity were another example of activities aimed at building resilience in the community. Many families rented apartments in the city (some of them for exorbitant prices, raised by the inhabitants of the city as the number of asylum seekers rose) but several families had long since run out of money and were forced to live in the waiting room of the station. My observations revealed that, while Chechens remained wary and reserved out of fear that other families might be related to Kadyrov’s people, they were also very helpful towards the weakest members of the community. For example, they mentioned that money was being raised for persons who had no financial means left. Often, these were the people who had stayed the longest in Brest and made the most trips (even up to 50) to the Polish border. Those round trips, made for the purpose of applying for asylum and crossing the border, were described by Chechens with the Russian word *popytka* meaning ‘attempt’. In spite of the very short distance between the cities, the cost of tickets was high and these journeys became a heavy financial burden for large Chechen families. *Popytka* served, therefore, as an indicator of the time spent in the border area and was used to establish which families needed help first. Those who had only recently arrived from Chechnya collected money for the ‘old arrivals’, who had made the highest number of attempts. In addition, interviewees mentioned the support which they received from relatives and from the Chechen diaspora in Germany, Austria and Belgium. To survive in difficult conditions was everyone’s aim, although sometimes for different reasons. Some of the asylum seekers clearly had nowhere else to go while others might have decided to stay in the hope of a change of policy or for fortune to smile on them at the next attempt.

Conclusion

In this article I have looked at the policy of ‘closed doors’ that the Polish government has adopted with regard to asylum seekers at the border with Belarus through selected conceptualisations developed within the field of border studies. The notion of ‘borderscape’ served as a conceptual lens helping to explain how a low-profile railway border crossing has become a highly politicised site filled with conflicting meanings and practices.

While the physical border and the laws governing it remained unchanged, bordering practices occurring on both sides of the demarcation line *within* the Polish and Belarusian state territories transformed it into a new social reality for asylum seekers, NGOs, journalists and train passengers. The power exercised by a nation-state over non-citizens remains a central problem in the context described; however it is no longer limited only to the Polish border guards at the crossing point but has transformed into Foucauldian ‘diffused’ forms of power, whereby actors (such as railway staff and Polish politicians) operating away from the border become the ‘door-keepers’ as they make decisions on entry to the Polish territory. In this changed reality, multiple new practices have emerged as a response (‘counter-power’) to the refusal of the right to entry, mobilising resources on both sides of the border. On a political level, power was applied by Polish state actors through a specific discourse

developed to support a restrictive migration policy. The concepts of framing and frame-alignment proved useful in explaining how and why certain interpretations were used by the Polish government to justify the push-backs at the border. On a more general level, this case study has helped our understanding of how borders are 'exploited to both mobilise and fix territory, security, identities, emotions and memories and various forms of national socialisation', as Paasi (2012: 2307) puts it and, in turn, has shed more light on the functioning of modern nation-states.

As part of the conclusion, I would like to point to one particular aspect of the 'bordering practices' described above that indicates pathways for further exploration, namely the entering of border governance into the sphere of the 'mundane ordinary world', the 'everyday life' of 'routines, taken for granted experiences, beliefs and practices', as described by Featherstone (1995, cited in Yuval-Davis 2013: 8–9). Connected with the imagery of 'diffused power' operating at the border, this idea is yet distinct in the sense that it points to the almost unnoticeable manner in which the everyday border routines operate. Logistical arrangements and ticket-selling practices (selling only return tickets and for designated seats) at the train station in Brest, which serve the purpose of segregating the passengers with different rights to the territory and facilitating the management of arrivals at destination, are examples of how the control of immigration diffused into the 'everyday' aspects of social life. Migration control thus became incorporated into the administrative functions of non-state actors (the railways administration) at the point of departure, where travellers with different statuses are governed while they make their daily journeys across the border. In their book, *Placing the Border in Everyday Life*, Jones and Johnson (2014) study the connection between borders and sovereign states by identifying such non-traditional actors – airlines and other transport companies and health and education institutions – which increasingly also play the role of guardians of the territory. Whereas the forms of control exercised by the guards at the border are visible and known, the practices of non-traditional agents often remain hidden behind the everyday routines. It is the sense of 'normalisation' accompanying everyday life, as Yuval-Davis (2013) calls it, that often makes it difficult to see the conflict and struggles that are part of it. Yet, in this and many other contexts, uncovering the hidden struggles of the 'everyday' is a particularly important task, necessary to understand not only the treatment of non-citizens by a nation-state but also the wider social relations within and beyond its boundaries.

Notes

¹ All the statistical data and information concerning asylum presented in this section come from UNHCR (2017).

² The findings from this monitoring were described in a Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights' report (Górczyńska and Szczepanik 2016).

³ All the statistical data and information concerning asylum presented in this section come from the Polish Office for Foreigners official website (Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców, *Statystyki – Zestawienia roczne*, <http://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki>, accessed: 20 February 2017) and Eurostat.

⁴ According to the UNHCR, arrivals via the Eastern and Central Mediterranean migration routes reached 1 million in 2015 and more than 350 000 in 2016. Source: <https://data2.unhcr.org/ar/documents/download/53447> (accessed: 24 July 2017).

⁵ Information provided on the website of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Belarus, *Rules on the Stay of Foreign Nationals and Stateless Persons on the Territory of Belarus* (*Правила пребывания иностранных граждан и лиц без гражданства в Республике Беларусь*), <http://mvd.gov.by/main.aspx?guid=3131> (accessed: 20 February 2017).

⁶ Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Belarus, *Statistics on Forced Migration (Статистические данные о вынужденной миграции в Республику Беларусь)*, <http://mvd.gov.by/main.aspx?guid=69883> (accessed: 20 February 2017).

⁷ In 2016, the border guards issued 88 268 decisions refusing entry to foreign nationals at the Polish–Belarusian border (this number covers Terespol as well as other border crossings with a significantly smaller cross-border movement) – a 217 per cent increase in comparison with 2015 (28 237 decisions). The vast majority of these decisions were issued to Russian citizens (74 391); the second largest national group refused entry were citizens of Tajikistan (5 735). This number includes all cases in which a foreign national did not meet the conditions necessary to enter Poland. Therefore it is not possible to specify the exact number of people who have unsuccessfully tried to submit an application for international protection, as the decisions they receive are no different from those received by persons who did not have a valid visa or who have declared economic reasons behind their request to enter Poland. However, a substantial increase in the number of refusals of entry may be connected with the push-back policy against asylum seekers at Polish borders. All statistics come from the official website of the Border Guard Headquarters (Komenda Główna Straży Granicznej, *Statystyki*, <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html>, accessed: 20 February 2017).

⁸ Article 28(2)(2)(b) of the Act of 12 December 2013 on foreigners (Journal of Laws 2013, position 1650, with further amendments). Online in Polish: <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20130001650> (accessed: 2 March 2017).

⁹ Article 30(1)(12) of the Act of 13 June 2003 on granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland (Journal of Laws 2012, position 680, with further amendments). Online in Polish: <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20031281176> (accessed: 2 March 2017).

¹⁰ The only person allowed access to the ‘first interview’ was the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights.

¹¹ Denying access to the procedure on granting international protection to persons who declare a fear of persecution in the country of origin is a violation of Article 33(1) of the Convention relating to the status of refugees (principle of *non-refoulement*) and Article 6(2) of the Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU) obliging the state to ensure an ‘effective opportunity to lodge [an asylum claim] as soon as possible’. A refusal of entry into Poland issued to a person seeking protection due to the lack of a valid entry document also violates Article 28(2)(2)(a) of the Polish Act on foreigners.

¹² UN General Assembly, *Convention relating to the status of refugees*, 28 July 1951, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, p. 137, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3be01b964.html> (accessed 09 March 2017).

¹³ See: Szczepanik and Tylec (2016).

¹⁴ For example: Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (2016).

Acknowledgements

I express my gratitude to the anonymous reviewers and the editorial board of CEERM for their helpful and constructive comments on earlier versions.

Funding

This article is based on the results of fieldwork conducted on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland, thanks to the general support provided by the Open Society Foundations.

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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How to cite this article: Szczepanik M. (2018). Border Politics and Practices of Resistance on the Eastern Side of ‘Fortress Europe’: The Case of Chechen Asylum Seekers at the Belarusian–Polish Border. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* 7(2): 69–89.

Russian Migrant Journalists in Ukraine After the EuroMaidan: From ‘Middling Transnationals’ to ‘Voluntary Exiles’?

Darya Malyutina*

Numerous Russian media professionals have moved to Ukraine in the last decade. These migrants can be seen as contemporary mobile, highly skilled, transnationally connected professionals who made a lifestyle choice by relocating to Ukraine. However, after the EuroMaidan, their move has also become increasingly political. Drawing upon a series of interviews with Russian media professionals living and working in Ukraine – and addressing their social relationships, professional practices and thoughts on return migration – I analyse the ways in which the lifestyles of these ‘middling transnationals’ can be affected by the political tensions between host and home countries. This paper draws upon the idea of transnational ties being not necessarily durable and supportive but, rather, flexible and multi-directional. I argue that the annexation of Crimea and the armed conflict in Donbas have altered migrants’ cross-border connections with Russia; however, instead of tying them to a place and excluding them from global networks, it might also push them towards inhabiting multiple transnational spaces. These observations highlight the political dimension of ‘middling transnationalism’ which is usually not considered in migration scholarship.

Keywords: middling transnationals; armed conflict; Ukraine; Russia; EuroMaidan

Introduction

Numerous Russian media professionals have moved to Ukraine in the last decade to continue their career, motivated by a comparatively free and pluralistic media space, new jobs, safety, personal relationships and/or a more preferable political environment.¹ The EuroMaidan, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and Russia’s military intervention in Donbas have all contributed to their numerous decisions to move to Ukraine or extend their stay there (but also to move away, for some, which is beyond the scope of this study), thus making this migration increasingly and overtly politicised.

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This population of migrant media professionals is quite unique. They could be seen as contemporary mobile, highly skilled, transnationally connected professionals who have made a lifestyle choice by relocating to Ukraine. At the same time, they have travelled from a country that has violated the territorial integrity and sovereignty of their host country, to the country under attack, so their move has inevitably been connected with a political choice. The war has also altered their opportunities to maintain intense cross-border connectivity.

Focusing on a set of interviews with Russian media professionals living and working in Ukraine, and drawing upon migrants' accounts of their social relationships, professional practices and thoughts on return migration, this study analyses how the lifestyles of these 'middling transnationals' can be affected by the conflict. This paper discusses not only the practical difficulties of staying embedded in transnational fields but also the journalists' own implications of changing or limiting their transnational engagements. I demonstrate the increasing complexity of contemporary migration as reflected through the contingent and uneven character of transnational engagement in politically tense circumstances. Theoretically, I also argue here that 'middling transnationals' as a migration category is not necessarily politically unproblematic and that its political dimension should not be underestimated by scholarship.

Why look at these subjects from a migration research perspective? It is worth stressing that, clearly, not all Russian journalists who have at some point worked and lived in Ukraine should be seen as weapons of an information war who are supposed to produce manipulative narratives, undermine the idea of Ukraine's sovereignty and/or European development, mentor Ukrainians and engage in all sorts of subversive activities. However, neither should they be approached as victims of Putin's regime, enlightened revolutionaries or brave Russian opposition members. This population has been quite diverse and, for theoretical purposes, this paper concentrated on those members of it who were, broadly speaking, inspired by the Maidan and motivated by it in their migration decisions, critical of the Russian regime and supportive of the idea of the democratic development of Ukraine. This case of pro-Ukrainian Russian migrant journalists in Ukraine demonstrates an interesting development in mobile individuals' life trajectories.

At the same time, it also does not seem to be an easy topic to discuss in the current circumstances, neither among experts and public intellectuals nor, particularly, among those who are heavily politically engaged in Ukrainian affairs. The academic relevance of the topic may virtually go unnoticed, while the ideas of the ongoing armed conflict and widespread information manipulation, Russian-ness and past belonging to the Russian media sphere of such research subjects often bring to the fore politicised and emotionally charged reactions. The major risk here is that the multifaceted experiences of migrants – contemporary Russian migrants specifically and Russian migrant journalists in particular – are ignored or approached in a simplistic manner. This is why I suggest that it is important to see these subjects as migrants in the first place. It is true that they are also an interesting case for a study in the fields of political science, media studies or Russian studies. However, I hope to demonstrate with this paper that Russian journalists in Ukraine are a valuable case from a migration research perspective which might help us to understand and problematise how the protests and armed conflict there affect different populations and their migration characteristics – including the figure of the flexible mobile professional that is so widespread in the contemporary academic migration literature.

Studying Russian journalists in Ukraine as migrants

This paper is based on 10 semi-structured face-to-face interviews conducted in Kyiv in late 2015 with media professionals who had moved from Russia to Ukraine before, during and after the EuroMaidan, and on 60 media articles in the English, Russian and Ukrainian language. By 'Russian journalists', I mean those who had lived and worked in Russia and in the Russian media prior to moving to Ukraine and who could self-identify

as part of the Russian media world at some point in their biographies. I selected respondents who were themselves the subjects of post-Maidan media stories focusing on Russian migrants in Ukraine. This study is, thus, an exploration of the particular qualitative characteristics of Russian journalists' lives in Ukraine two years after the start of the EuroMaidan, focusing on relatively prominent personalities who were supportive of it. These generally pro-Ukrainian subjects have been selected to achieve homogeneity of the sample.² The respondents' names have been anonymised, except for the two journalists who died in 2016: Pavel Sheremet and Alexander Shchetinin.

I spoke with seven men and three women, including three editors, four journalists and three people who, at the time of the interview, did not consider media work to be their main or only occupation. My respondents worked in online media, magazines, radio and online TV, often freelancing for a number of outlets. Among my informants, three moved to Ukraine after the Maidan, one just prior to it and six before 2013. Six of them were either working for local Kyiv-based outlets established by Russian teams, or making occasional appearances in such media (see Malyutina 2017 for more detail on related methodological concerns).

As migrants, the respondents arrived from the country which had been, effectively, waging war against Ukraine since 2014 (Czuperski, Herbst, Higgins, Polyakova and Wilson 2015; Miller, Vaux, Fitzpatrick and Weiss 2015; Rácz 2015). Moreover, since the Russian state media have been heavily engaged in manipulative, information-distorting practices in the context of the armed conflict (Lucas and Pomerantsev 2016; Rácz 2015), the journalists' (past) belonging to the Russian media space may be viewed by their Ukrainian audiences as incriminating and suspicious.³ It is worth noting that Russian and Ukrainian media spaces could be described as having been entangled and overlapping before the Maidan and, to some extent, even after the start of the conflict – although in a much more complicated way, which I discuss in the following sections.

Russian media professionals are quite diverse in terms of background, career trajectories, political views, migration circumstances and involvement in social networks. At the same time, they are usually highly skilled migrants who have gained media experience back in Russia and/or other countries. Working in Ukraine did not mean marginalisation and precarious working conditions for my informants; they spoke about this as an exciting job-related and personal experience, an escape from an oppressive environment or a career step. They also recognised, however, the local risks and challenges they could face: from potential physical risks to a decrease in income and from the prejudiced attitude of audiences (such as stigmatising their Russian-ness and previous work in the Russian media) to self-imposed limitations on writing about sensitive issues (such as not commenting publicly on Ukrainian political matters) (Malyutina 2017).

While there are connections among the members of this population, they do not form a tightly knit and bounded ethnic, national or linguistic community. Nor does their work fit into the framework of 'migrant media': it is not the migrant audiences that they or the media organisations they are working in are targeting specifically. In other words, even though, at the time of the interviews, some worked in media outlets that were created by (predominantly) Russian teams, neither their jobs nor their personal relationships and political views confine them to some ethnic bubble in their migrant lives in Ukraine. Being Russian-speakers or not speaking Ukrainian did not seem to pose any significant problems according to the respondents (and was certainly part of Ukraine's attractiveness as a host country); at the same time, many of them were learning Ukrainian and admitted that proficiency in this language was helpful in terms of gaining the trust of local audiences and establishing some connections.

These migrants were affected by a combination of reasons when making their mobility decisions. These were usually related to work, family and personal relationships and, increasingly in the last few years, politics and safety concerns. Although many have come to work on particular media projects, this is not simply economic migration: the move does not necessarily signify an increase in income or job stability. Some had

Ukrainian spouses, although this was never mentioned as the only motivation for moving. While other motivations may include the desire of these middle-class individuals to live and work in an environment where freedom of expression and media pluralism are seen as being more prevalent than in Russia and which may be interpreted as more attractive, less oppressive and/or less depressing,⁴ this is not exactly lifestyle migration⁵ because it largely happens against the background of an armed conflict between the home and host countries. For a significant number of those currently living and working in Ukraine, the EuroMaidan, the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in the East, combined with the unprecedented pressure on independent media and freedom of speech, and the increase in militant state-sponsored propaganda in Russia, have played a special role in the decisions to move to Ukraine (or to stay there, if they had moved before 2013).⁶ However, neither can their experiences be squarely compared with those of refugees fleeing war (although there are a few refugee journalists from Russia) for the same reason: their host country is under hybrid attack by their home country, in terms of both military and information warfare. Finally, with regard particularly to those who moved before the Maidan and decided to stay throughout the dramatic events that followed, their perceptions of migration may shift dynamically from a personal choice to a more political decision.⁷

How can we, then, approach this peculiar group of migrants who, apparently, cannot be easily pigeonholed into a category? The trend in migration research has been to increasingly avoid unequivocal categorisations, seeing them as not sophisticated enough to account for often multifaceted and dynamic migratory situations. For instance, Van Hear (2003: 13) challenges the categorisations of forced migrants as ‘in some ways illusory’, stressing that different kinds of movement may be experienced over time. Kubal (2012: 7–8) questions the concept of ‘illegality’ and its derivatives as being ‘applied far too easily while in fact they denote many different legal statuses’, invoking ‘semi-legality’ instead, and claiming that ‘one should look at the variety of semi-legal statuses placed on a continuum between two poles “legal–illegal”’. This corresponds to an interest in ‘going beyond polarity’ in examining migratory experiences (Ryan, Klekowski von Koppenfels and Mulholland 2015: 199). In her research on post-EU accession Polish and Lithuanian migrants in the UK, Parutis (2014) argues against a rigid distinction between low-skilled and highly skilled migrants or simply classifying her respondents as economic migrants, since their work experiences are dynamic and multilayered and, in addition to economic gains, they are seeking personal and professional development.

Like Parutis, in order to approach these migrants, who do not quite fit into particular pre-existing categories, I suggest using the term ‘middling transnationals’ – introduced by Conradson and Latham (2005a) as a response to transnational scholarship’s then predominant focus on mobile elites and migrants from developing countries. ‘Middling transnationals’ are usually educated, mobile individuals who occupy more or less middle-class or status positions both in their countries of origin and in those to which they are moving, and who are drawn to new places not only or not necessarily by the attractions of the labour market but also by ‘an appreciation of their wider social and cultural affordances’ (Conradson and Latham 2005b: 290). For such migrants, mobility is ‘intimately bound up with practices of self-realisation and self-fashioning’ (Conradson and Latham 2005b: 300). The term ‘middling transnationals’ is also not unproblematic, though – as stressed by Ryan *et al.* (2015: 199), who point out the risk of the use of ‘middling’ as a vague grouping. However, while this term in a broad sense could arguably be employed to describe the experiences of many Russian journalists in Ukraine *before* the Maidan, things have become more complicated after the revolution, the annexation of Crimea and the start of the armed conflict in Donbas.

The existing literature on ‘middling’ migrants explores lifestyles, relationships and mobilities that are taking place against peaceful backgrounds; the political dimensions of such migration are usually relatively unproblematic. However, what happens to ‘middling transnationals’ when politics and war start playing a significant role in their migration experiences? In the rest of this paper, I try to answer this question by

demonstrating that this migrant category is not devoid of political influences and motivations; a closer look at its cross-border practices and relationships may be helpful for understanding this.

Transnational lifestyles

Transnational connectivity implies border-spanning links and interactions between people and institutions due to the growth in communication and transportation technologies, which may range from sustaining ties with local communities and families ‘back home’ and the exchange of material resources, travel and communication, to overlapping political memberships and involvement in home-country politics (Levitt 2001; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999; Vertovec 1999).

However, as suggested by Guarnizo, Sanchez and Roach (1999: 367), transnational relations and activities ‘do not follow a linear path and are not necessarily and inevitably a progressive process’. While transnational social spaces and relationships have been described as durable in some literature (Pries 2001), scholarship generally stresses the uneven, differentiated and unstable nature of migrants’ transnational engagements (Al-Ali, Black and Koser 2001; Jurgens 2001; Smith 2005).

This study follows the argument that transnational ties are not necessarily a universal or a permanent characteristic of contemporary migrant lifestyles, stressing that they can be connected with tension, mistrust and the dissolution of personal and professional networks. Relationships are affected by cross-border mobility and, in this process, new mobile subjectivities may emerge ‘to manage difference and re-find points of comfort defined by shared meanings’ (Butcher 2009: 1353) that are also connected with changes in emotional and affective states accompanying mobility (Conradson and McKay 2007).

Migration scholarship addresses the implications of migrants’ border-spanning social ties that exhibit ‘considerable fragmentation and tension in both instrumental and affective terms, even in a favourable social and political climate for sustaining them’ (Moroşanu 2013: 353). The reasons why cross-border ties with the home countries of individuals embedded in transnational social fields may decline can vary. Jurgens (2001: 100) suggests that this may happen when the country of origin loses its role as a point of reference or as ‘a central pole for the intimate lived experiences of second- and third-generation migrants’. However, even within one generation of recent migrants, transnational links may weaken or disappear with time, either when individuals’ lifestyles or involvement in local social networks change (Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara 2008: 684–685; see also Kivisto 2001) or due to ‘tensions related to values, life-course or career progression, leading to incompatibility in the long run’ (Moroşanu 2013: 368). Ryan *et al.* (2015) warn against taking the transnational links for granted – even those of relatively affluent migrants who have access to contemporary communication technologies – and argue that such relationships ‘require ongoing effort and mutual commitment to ensure that the connections endured despite physical separation’. In more extreme cases, traumatic or shocking experiences connected with the (former) homeland may decrease the willingness to engage in its affairs (Al-Ali *et al.* 2001). Butcher (2009: 1364) summarises the feeling of dislocation as a result of seeing the home country “‘differently” (from a distance)”, as well as being driven by ‘emotional responses of no longer feeling related to former anchors such as family and friends “back home” because of shifting frames of reference between the expatriate, and family and peers who have remained in [home country]’.

How exactly do these frames of reference shift in a situation that is as politically tense as the Russia–Ukraine conflict and that creates an unfavourable ‘social and political climate’ for sustaining transnational connections? In the rest of this paper, I explore how transnational and local practices and engagements have been challenged by the current political situation.

Migrant life trajectories

Russian media professionals moving to Ukraine has not been a linear, one-dimensional movement that uproots the individual and ties him or her to a new location. Initially, transnational lifestyles were developed that involved more-or-less-regular travel between Ukraine and Russia – having part of the family across the border, retaining personal and professional connections, keeping their Russian citizenship and not feeling the practical need to obtain a Ukrainian passport. The move from one country to another has been described as a somewhat gradual and smooth process by many journalists. Some already had connections with the Ukrainian media sphere prior to the move which, in such cases, has become a relocation rather than a revolutionary change. One of the respondents, self-describing as a journalist and human rights advocate, spoke about ‘not really having left Russia’ and regularly visiting his ‘parents and a cat’ there.

Another interviewee, the former editor-in-chief of an influential Ukrainian publication, recalled the ease of the commute and living in two countries for a while, before the Maidan:

I first moved, myself [in 2010] – my wife and two daughters stayed in Moscow until the end of the school year. I commuted between Kyiv and Moscow for half a year. (...) It was quite convenient – you fly on Monday morning, and it takes five hours to get from home to work (male, interview on 7 November 2015).

Such lifestyles, involving ‘having two homes at once’, seemed to be quite common and comfortable for a number of people. However, the conflict has impacted on fast and convenient travel. From suspicion at the border and the long checks of (especially male) Russian citizens, to the 2015 ban on direct flights between Russia and Ukraine, crossing the border has become more difficult. However, post-Maidan developments have made living simultaneously in two countries difficult not only in practical terms but also in terms of changing attitudes to the idea of Russia as a home. Alexander Shchetinin, founder of the Novyi Region press agency and head of its Ukraine-based branch, who committed suicide in his Kyiv flat in August 2016, recalled in his interview:

[Initially, the move] was not connected with some sort of political choice. I just fell in love with Kyiv and started thinking about the ways of self-realisation here. We opened our editorial office in Crimea in 2004 (...) and another editorial office in Kyiv in 2005. But it was an information business for me; I did not think about changing my country of residence or citizenship, I was absolutely comfortable living in two countries at the same time. Novyi Region had 17 editorial offices then and I was constantly travelling. Then, gradually, I relocated to Kyiv and only went to Russia on business trips. Also, I got married in Kyiv, bought a flat. But still, I used to have two homes, in Moscow and in Kyiv. (...) Everything changed after the annexation of Crimea. I had a very clear position. I declared that I renounced my Russian citizenship. (...) This choice is political, after all (17 November 2015).

In his narrative, the journalist demonstrated the transformation of his migration choice from ‘not political’, to ‘political, after all’, which seemed to have cemented his decision to exclude Russia from his transnational social space. A similar kind of shift in perception of an individual’s own migrant image has been suggested by veteran journalist Evgenii Kiselev:

Back in 2008, I came here for work purposes after I received a very interesting job proposition. Then bad things started to happen in Russia. I began to dislike Putin’s Russia more and more. Long before the [2015]

assassination of [opposition politician] Boris Nemtsov, I realised that it was no longer safe for me in Russia. So I started out in Ukraine as an economic migrant, and became a voluntary exile (Dickinson 2015).

However, seeing the move to Ukraine as a transition from an ‘economic migrant’ to a ‘voluntary exile’ appears to be somewhat too simplistic, representing it as a binary choice while, in reality, the transformation reflects a further complication of migrants’ positions. Indeed, the already mentioned Shchetinin stopped travelling to Russia, did not have any information business left there at the time of the interview, and spoke about having sold his flat and garage there; at the same time, this did not prevent him from regularly travelling elsewhere for business purposes and spending winters in Thailand. Moreover, even though he had declaratively renounced his Russian citizenship, he admitted still using his Russian passport as a travel document. In other words, it is hard to say that he had become less mobile, lost his ability to inhabit multiple social spaces and work across borders, or got rid of all connections with the country of origin. Such stories suggest that shifts in migrant lives have been not radical but, perhaps, rather sophisticated and differentiated.

Moving to Ukraine does not mean abandoning social and political activities in Russia, although these opportunities are usually reduced. For most of my respondents, the move also meant limiting their professional relationships with the Russian media, which were reduced to the occasional publication or collaboration and maintaining personal contacts. Some said that the ongoing conflict increased the need for the cross-border interconnectedness of the Ukrainian and Russian (independent) media. Yet, for more people, the actual cooperation has become sporadic; answers to the question of the extent to which the connections have been preserved were commonly along the lines of ‘Depends on the media’ or ‘Connections remain exclusively with particular people I know who sometimes ask me to write something’. The late Pavel Sheremet, journalist of Belarusian origin who worked at *Ukrayinska Pravda* and *Radio Vesti* and was killed by a car-bomb explosion in Kyiv in July 2016, spoke about differences in views on events from different locations:

I write for Ogoniok magazine, but very infrequently, because the view on Ukrainian events from Kyiv is significantly different from the view from Moscow. And we often argue with the editor about it. I don't want to adjust to the Russian audience. (...) Sometimes it's impossible to find common ground. That's why I don't work [with Russian media] very actively (16 November 2015).

Smith (2005: 237–238) stresses the importance of historically contextualised and translocalised research that ‘forces us to think about the emplacement of mobile subjects’ and ‘guards against the macro-analytic view of transnational mobility as occurring in a hyper-mobile “space of flows”’. Transnational relationships and communication are not deterritorialised; spatiality and temporality are significant factors for sustaining them, as well as an ‘emotional availability and a commitment to continued investment in the co-construction of shared social fields’ (Ryan *et al.* 2015: 205). Being in Ukraine does not mean ceasing to follow developments in Russia; however, the local embeddedness affects the results of media work and increases the role of local affiliations, interests and engagements. In other words, place matters: flexible and mobile transnationals are, nevertheless, located in one place at any given moment and develop attachments, relationships and interests that tie them to this location, even if temporarily. As argued by Kivisto (2001: 571), ‘the issues and concerns of that place will tend to take precedence over the more removed issues and concerns of the homeland’ if most of the time is spent in the host country. For some of my respondents, being located in Kyiv and keeping busy and engaged in local events, may be contributing to a tipping of the balance. Sheremet observed:

Some people keep having their body in Kyiv but their mind in Moscow. This is a road to nowhere. (...) I stopped thinking about Moscow, I only remember it when I think of my children who are studying at

university there. After my friend [Boris] Nemtsov was killed, something got broken inside of me. I don't take part in any Russian liberatory movement or counter-propaganda initiatives, and I'm not going to. I don't know if I'll be back. (...) It is so interesting in Ukraine right now, life is so full of events, that I feel I have enough emotions here in Ukraine.

As I mentioned earlier, maintaining intense cross-border connectivity may become difficult not just for practical reasons; a particular moral stance can be involved here. Another journalist who, at the time of the interview, worked at an online TV station, reflected on these challenges:

I find it hard coming to Russia every time. (...) Sometimes it draws me and sometimes it doesn't – there is a certain degree of nostalgia, the feeling that I haven't been home for a long time, I mean my historical motherland. On the other hand, as soon as I start thinking about what's going on there, the levels of idiocy and stupidity, and of depression (...) I don't really feel like going there. Anyway, there are not many friends left there, many have quarrelled [because of opposing views on the Ukrainian situation] (female, 13 November 2015).

Maintaining relationships across borders is an important element of transnational lifestyles. Most of my respondents asserted that they have not suffered a significant loss of social ties with Russian friends, relatives, and colleagues while in Ukraine, explaining it by initially being part of circles that have been most likely to support Ukraine and to criticise the position of the Russian regime. A number of people spoke about friends visiting them in Ukraine or expressing the desire to do so.

However, the informants experienced the break-down of some social ties. The move to Ukraine *per se* is less likely to cause a strain in personal relationships than contradicting views on the EuroMaidan, Russian politics and the armed conflict in the East of Ukraine. At this point, arguably, the key challenge of transnational social ties concerns the possibility of maintaining the remaining relationships across the border in the face of an ongoing conflict. For instance, Shchetinin said that, while his relationships had seemed unaffected at the beginning of the protests in 2013, by April 2014, after the annexation of Crimea, he was also faced with misunderstanding and difficulties:

I still have some friends in [Russia], and my first wife. But actually, it's the same with her. During the Maidan she wrote, 'We're so proud of you, well done!' But then in spring [2014] she started writing: 'Actually, you guys [in Ukraine] are wrong about the Russian language'. I asked her, 'What about the Russian language?' 'That you banned it'.⁸ I say, 'You came with me to the first [opposition] rallies in Russia. Damn it, you were my comrade in arms, but now you are saying such things'!

A more recent arrival recalled that he 'had to say goodbye' to a few people since he moved:

I had a rather sad discussion with my favourite school teacher. She had always seemed to be an adequate person. (...) I always thought she had been critical about what was going on. (...) When this schizophrenia [propaganda-triggered patriotism] started, I had to have a serious talk with her. I was told that 'There is a sacred concept of motherland', 'Motherland cannot be wrong', and 'You'll understand it when you grow up'. I said, 'If something like this happens to me when I'm old, I hope there will be someone to suffocate me with a pillow somewhere in a corner'. So we parted company (male, 5 November 2015).

Finally, in addition to professional and personal relationships, I asked my respondents about their views on a potential return to Russia. While some still occasionally travelled to the country, none of the media professionals had immediate thoughts of returning to Russia: there was a sense of a lack of safety, of jobs or of perspectives for social and political change. The most common reaction was that they were not completely excluding the possibility of going back but were not tying their future to a particular location. Typical responses were as follows:

Hope to return when Putin is overthrown (...) it's my motherland after all (male, 7 November 2015).

If the political situation changes there, of course I'll go, it will be very interesting to observe (male, 10 November 2015).

I don't exclude the possibility of return, it's not like I've severed all ties. It's just that I'm not planning to do so in the foreseeable future (female, 21 November 2015).

However, a number of journalists seemed to report a radical change in their attitude towards Russia and stressed the impossibility of going back there to live. Notably, such narratives often envisage visiting the country, perhaps in a different political situation; however, Russia as a permanent place of residence seems to be off the agenda:

I'm not going to return to Russia; this is a conscious choice of a different motherland. I even wrote about it – turns out that a motherland can be chosen (male, 17 November 2015).

My friends are joking that I can only possibly return in the capacity of a gauleiter of some oblast [governor of a district]. No, I won't. Maybe just as a tourist. (...) I'm not going back to live in Russia. Ukraine is my home now (male, 5 November 2015).

I was born there, I can't escape the fact that I'm Russian. (...) But I'll never ever live in Russia again, definitely, this is impossible. Some mechanisms have changed inside of me, I can't live like people do there. (...) Ukraine is not perfect, but it is much easier and nicer to live here (female, 13 November 2015).

Stressing the heterogeneity of transmigration as well as the difference in 'rates of access to opportunities in the "receiving" cities that are grounded sites of the translocal interconnectivity', Smith (2005: 243) underlines that not all migrants are able to maintain active translocal ties and that the practice of maintaining them differs. The variety of migrant journalists' attitudes to the idea of return points to the idea of the differentiation of contemporary transnational migration that exists even within migrant populations of the same origin and within the same location in the host society. However, it is also clear that political developments in Ukraine and Russia have had an impact on this population in the sense that they are limiting the migrants' cross-border connectivity with the country of origin.

I argue that the general trend for Russian migrant journalists in Ukraine since the Maidan has been not a shift from one migrant type to another (as some of them have indeed suggested) but, rather, a merging of various migration characteristics. While some of the transnational ties of these mobile professionals have weakened, the latter have not turned into radically different kinds of migrant. This is not to say that, before the Maidan, those of them who moved earlier could be easily categorised. Rather, their experiences have become

even more complicated, possibly incorporating features of economic migrants and political refugees, ‘voluntary exiles’ and lifestyle migrants.

The literature on middling transnationalism does not usually stress the political implications of mobility. The case of Russian media professionals in Ukraine suggests that war makes the lives of middling transnationals more difficult; however, instead of tying them to a place and excluding them from global networks, perhaps it might push them towards a transnationalism that is not just focused on a home country but which may ‘transcend the national, and generally the territorial, principle, with repercussions for identity-belonging’ (Colic-Peisker 2010: 467). Indeed, in summer 2017, one of my respondents announced that she was leaving Ukraine and moving to the US to work for a major multimedia broadcasting organisation, while not severing ties with the media outlet in Kyiv and staying involved in its ongoing projects: ‘For now, for one year, and then let’s see’.

Conclusion

Migration becomes increasingly complex and multidimensional in the context of political crisis and armed conflict; however, the lifestyles and practices of ‘middling transnationals’ are usually analysed in peaceful environments and in ways that lack attention to the political underpinnings of any such migration. Before the EuroMaidan, Russian media professionals living and working in Ukraine were deeply embedded in transnational social fields. The protests, the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas have altered their opportunities and/or willingness to maintain intense cross-border connectivity with the country of origin in a variety of ways – concerning travel, personal and professional connections, involvement in social and political events and the idea of return migration. This is connected with state policies and ongoing military actions, social factors such as declining involvement in cross-border relationships, parallel increased engagement in local Ukrainian social and political life, and the development of a disillusionment and frustration that stimulate detachment from Russian social networks, media and institutions. Such detachment is not necessarily only explained by political reasons.

In this respect, the answer to the question in the title of this paper – whether these migrants have turned from middling transnationals into ‘voluntary exiles’ – suggests that the events since late 2013 have contributed to a further complication of migration characteristics rather than to a linear shift from one category to another. Living in Ukraine may be described as many things at the same time: an interesting career experience, an exciting adventure, a choice of a more comfortable lifestyle, an escape from a more oppressive society that does not offer suitable career opportunities, a search for journalistic and personal freedom and a political statement.

In this paper, I have drawn upon the idea of transnational ties being not necessarily stable, durable and supportive. I have explored the situation where mobile professionals were confronted with a political factor that was introduced to their migrant lives at the start of large-scale protests and an armed conflict. This particular case study suggests that the decline of cross-border connectivity with the country of origin may, and does, happen in such circumstances. While it may not mean a complete severing of all ties and a loss of mobility potential, it nevertheless affects the migrants to different degrees. This may, at the same time, draw more attention to the ways in which individuals inhabit transnational spaces that go beyond the binary of host–home country, which may be a topic for further research on middling transnationals during political crises. Transnational connections thus demonstrate their flexible and multidirectional nature.

Notes

¹ See, for example, Dickinson (2015); *Echo Moskvy* (2015); *Ukrayinska Pravda* (2015); Sergatskova (2015); Sheremet (2015). Journalists and media managers from Russia have been moving to Ukraine and working there since before the Maidan; however, as my data are limited to post-Maidan interviews and sources, a comparative study of pre- and post-2014 migration patterns is beyond the scope of this research.

² By ‘generally pro-Ukrainian’, I mean those who were supportive of the EuroMaidan – and the idea of the European development of Ukraine – and critical of Russia’s actions, such as the annexation of Crimea and military intervention in Donbas. Clearly, not all Russian media professionals who have lived and worked in Ukraine in the last decade fit into this description. As suggested by my respondents and media publications, a number of such Russian professionals have since left Ukraine because of the political changes; a number of journalists have been deported by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) because of ‘pro-Kremlin’ stances (*Novoe Vremya* 2017). However, it was not my intention to address all kinds of Russian media professionals who have ever worked in Ukraine. For the purposes of this paper, I am primarily interested in a particular kind of migrant, whose Russian-ness or media-related professional background is contextually important but not the main focus of this work. In other words, my subjects were middling transnationals who, at the time of the interviews, were staying in their host country partly for political reasons; those who were leaving for political reasons are a different group and require a different study.

³ The journalists’ ways of dealing with possible stigmatisation of their ‘Russian-ness’ and public perceptions of their past belonging to the Russian media space are discussed in detail in Malyutina (2017).

⁴ The results of this study are valid for the time period before 2016, after which the changing socio-political situation, both in Russia and Ukraine, may have started to change the perceptions and motivations behind (potential) migratory decisions. The vision of Kyiv as a safe city (and Ukraine in general, excluding the war-affected territories) and, more specifically, as a relatively safe place for Russian journalists, politicians and activists, is becoming more blurred. The reasons for this have been the murders of journalist Pavel Sheremet in 2016, of politician Denis Voronenkov in 2017 and of other individuals, as well as the 2018 staged murder of journalist Arkadiy Babchenko – an SBU operation to foil an assassination attempt which was heavily criticised by the journalistic community as unethical, undermining trust in the media and the Ukrainian authorities and, ultimately, playing into the Kremlin’s hands (*BBC News* 2018). All this is unlikely to contradict my conclusions about the flexible, multidirectional and malleable nature of my respondents’ cross-border ties. However, it may suggest that politics and safety concerns are starting to matter more, and perhaps in different ways, than they did earlier, in the lives of media professionals who might be considering moving elsewhere (from Russia or maybe from Ukraine).

⁵ Lifestyle migrants are defined, broadly, as ‘relatively affluent individuals of all ages, moving either part-time or full-time to places that, for various reasons, signify, for the migrant, a better quality of life’ (Benson and O’Reilly 2009: 609). Knowles and Harper (2010: 172) describe such migrants as living ‘permanently temporary lives’, where further relocation is always a possible option. These features are usually approached as part of the increased transnational connectivity of contemporary migrants. Torkington (2012: 74) locates the idea of lifestyle migration within ‘late modern, global, elitist, borderless and highly mobile social practices’.

⁶ For some insights into the ways in which Russian media managers and journalists have been dealing with the Kremlin’s increasing authoritarianism since Putin’s third term and how they developed strategies to survive professionally or remain successful, see, for example, the recent special issue of *Russian Politics* (Schimpfössl and Yablokov 2017).

⁷ As suggested by my interviewees, for many of those who moved in the last decade, the move has gained additional meanings, often under the influence of EuroMaidan and subsequent developments both in Ukraine and Russia. This has included a combination of push and pull factors. The EuroMaidan represented a tangible hope for democratic development, in contrast to the worsening situation in Russia in terms of the Kremlin's tightening control of the local media, making Ukraine be seen as a safer place for work and a promising environment for professional development.

⁸ This refers to the temporary repeal of the 2012 language laws after the Maidan, which was presented as an oppression of the Russian language by Russian state media.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the CEEMR editor and the anonymous reviewers for the opportunity to publish this paper and for their helpful suggestions. I am also thankful to the Polish Institute of Advanced Studies in Warsaw where I wrote this paper while being based there as a Junior Fellow. I received no funding for this study.

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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How to cite this article: Malyutina D. (2018). Russian Migrant Journalists in Ukraine After the Euro-Maidan: From 'Middling Transnationals' to 'Voluntary Exiles'? *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* 7(2): 91–104.

— SPECIAL SECTION —

Religion and Gender in Migration to and from Central and Eastern Europe – Introductory Reflections

Katarzyna Leszczyńska*, Sylwia Urbańska**,
Katarzyna Zielińska***

Since the beginning of the 1980s, the previously one-dimensional economic approach that was once dominant in migration studies has been critically reviewed and, as a result, migration has become problematised. The incorporation of other dimensions in the analysis of the processes of migration allowed for more complex diagnoses of global inequalities and related socio-cultural phenomena. As a result, gender became one of the key categories providing an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of migration (see Anthias and Lazaridis 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). The inclusion of this aspect in analyses has revealed the tremendous diversity of experiences of male and female migrants, and uncovered new global phenomena related to migration, such as global import of care or care chains (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Parreñas 2001). Furthermore, it has also shown that migration is shaped, at every stage and to the same extent as economic concerns, by diverse socio-cultural dimensions. As a result, since the 1990s, intersectional perspectives on migration have become increasingly popular in research, examining such dimensions as gender, ethnicity, class, race and sexuality. Nowadays, critical and intersectional approaches have even come to represent the paradigmatic core of migration research.

At the same time, it is important to note that other potentially productive analytical categories have not attracted much interest from researchers studying aspects of migration. For a significant period in the development of this field, one such category was religion.¹ As Louise Ryan and Elena Vacchelli point out, contemporary migration studies tend to marginalise the significance of religion in their analyses and interpretations of the daily lives of migrant women and men (Ryan and Vacchelli 2013). They note that the main reason for the absence of references to religion in these studies is the cultural context of secularism, in which contemporary researchers of migration (usually from the Global North) are raised and in which they work. Religion in

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this context acquires a dual meaning – on the one hand, its importance is interpreted as marginal in understanding the experiences of migration, while on the other, it tends to be analysed critically as a source of oppression of migrants (especially women) and of restrictions on human actions, and thus as an important cause of forced migrations. This approach to religion in studies on migration – often reductionist, stereotypical, one-dimensional – is also associated with the analysis of intercultural relations in the context of multiculturalism. Such analyses therefore tend to focus especially on conflicts, tensions and prejudices that are generated within religious fields and of which the actors are religions in the broadest terms (i.e. religious discourses, institutions, or identities) (see: Goździak and Shandy 2002; Krotofil 2013: 53; Urbańska as well as Goździak and Márton, in this volume).

Another important reason for the paucity of references to religion in studies on migration is the fact that such studies largely focus on the macro-dimension of migration policies, systems and institutions, as well as the economic motives of migrants' actions, which are usually secular in nature (see Bonifacio and Angeles 2010: 2). However, even in research into the socio-cultural dimensions of migration, there has only been sporadic interest in the question of how spirituality, religion and the related institutional affiliation and social networks mediate the experience of migration at its various stages. This failure to recognise religion in studies on migration is, according to Sylwia Urbańska, symptomatic and paradoxical, because many scholars conducting fieldwork in migrant communities benefit from the assistance of ethnic religious organisations – churches, mission and diaspora organisations etc. (Urbańska 2016: 53), but treat them more as a source of information in the preparation of their field research and as contact points, rather than as a distinct field worthy of in-depth research.

It appears that only the post-secular turn observed in the social sciences since the early 2000s (cf. Braidotti 2008) and the increasingly strong presence of an intersectional perspective in migration research from the 1990s onwards have permitted the development of research and theoretical perspectives in studies on migration that have attention for gender and religion. As a result, in recent years we have seen attempts by authors of studies on migration to reflect on the ways in which both gender and religion – understood in organisational terms, but also as values, norms and practices – influence and differentiate migration experiences. Such works include those of Glenda Tibe Bonifacio and Vivienne S. M. Angeles (2010) and Charles Hirschman (2004), who stress that religion is one of the key dimensions of migrants' experiences, i.e. that the processes of migration can only be understood within the framework of religion and gender. Women today comprise almost half of the global migrant population (Donato and Gabaccia 2016), and have different social experiences than men, depending on their role, status, and social expectations as well as on religion. Many studies have demonstrated that religion is an important element of women's identity, who tend not only to be more religious than men, but also to be more attached to the religious community and involved in the processes of religious socialisation of the younger generations (see: Francis and Penny 2014; Levitt 2008; Ozorak 1996; Walter and Davie 1998; Traversa 2012). The models of practices within religious structures also vary, although these differences are not dichotomous, but intersectional, and therefore connected to class, age or ethnicity. This diversity becomes particularly significant in research on migration if one takes into account the fact – discussed by Urbańska in this volume – that the majority of migrant women in Western societies originate from the cultures of the Global South and of Central and Eastern Europe, both of which are areas characterised by a greater attachment to religion and statistically greater religiosity than the societies of the Global North. Religion as an important element of the social identity and belonging, value systems, and actions of migrants – and especially women – is subject to a transnational dynamic and transformations. Above all, there exists a relationship between religion and the social environment (including the state, economic institutions, law, other religions, etc.), and, as Talal Asad writes, it is this relationship to the social world that also needs to be analysed (Asad 1993; see also: Bonifacio and Angeles 2010). Migration creates new room for change for 'doing gender', in identity-

related, institutional or structural terms. These transformations are the result of globalisation, differentiation, or the growing complexity of the contemporary world (see: Traversa 2012). The category of religion also reveals previously unexplored new dimensions of motivations for migration, thus expanding the push-pull theory of the causes of migration. As Catharina P. Williams shows (2008: 345–349), religion is an important factor in making the decision to migrate (e.g. legitimising migration decisions, since for one gender it is identified as the space of moral risk), but also a way of coping with the challenges, stress and costs of migration (e.g. prayer as a coping mechanism). Researchers also analyse the way in which religion mediates in the process of integration with the host society (especially where the dominant religion is different from the religion of the migrants). Adding to this the category of gender clearly demonstrates the differences in women's and men's use of both religious meanings and religious organisations in coping with the migration experience (cf. Bonifacio and Angeles 2010). This topic is developed in detail by Urbańska in her article in this issue, *Assessing the Significance of Religion Perspectives in the Gender and Migration Studies: New Avenues for Scholarly Inquiry*. This integration of the categories of gender and religion (also supplemented by other dimensions, such as ethnicity and generation) is especially visible in research in the context of Western Europe and the United States (see e.g. Bonifacio and Angeles 2010; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000), particularly in migrant Muslim communities (e.g. Bendixen 2010; Chafic 2010; Pristed Nielsen 2010; Stambouli and Ben Soltane 2010), or various churches, denominations and religious movements from the Far East (e.g. Hüwelmeier 2010; Yang 2002).

Studies focusing on the experiences of migrants from/to Central and Eastern Europe examined from a gender perspective and also considering their embeddedness in the religious field are few and far between. Among the few examples are Krystyna Bleszyńska and Marek Szopski's analysis of the gender dimension of the religiosity of Polish migrants in California (2010), and a study of the links between religion and emancipation of female Polish immigrants in Iceland (Koralewska 2016). It is worth noting that religion in these studies is usually understood as one of the dimensions of ethnicity or in relation to ethnicity, rather than autonomously, as a separate cultural space that triggers, directs, enables or determines social actions. The few existing perspectives of this kind can be found in anthropological research (see the studies on the Vietnamese community in Germany by Gertrude Hüwelmeier (2010) and in Poland by Grażyna Szymańska-Matusiewicz (2013), as well as on Macedonians in Italy by Karolina Bielenin-Lenczowska (2015) and Polish women in the Polish Catholic Mission in Italy by Agnieszka Małek (2008)). In this sense, the aim of the articles presented in this section, considering the Central and Eastern European perspective, is at least in part to fill this gap. They examine the mutual relations between various dimensions of religion, gender and migration, identifying the first category as central, and separate from other systems (the aforementioned ethnicity and ideology).

This relationship, taking into account the fluidity and transformations in migration within the scope of the orders of gender and religion, is the subject of the analyses presented in this volume. Aleksandra Kaczmarek-Day's article *'White Dress, Guests and Presents': Polish Migrant Families' Practice of the First Communion and Negotiation of Catholic Identities in Wales* presents the results of research on the religious practices of Polish Catholics in Wales accompanying the rituals of the First Communion, the modifications to these practices and their dependence on the social environment. She particularly emphasises the role of women/mothers in producing new models of actions in religious rituals. The different practices become not only an expression of ethnicity, but especially a form of questioning religious customs. This reflects their liberalisation and simultaneous individualisation in the migration process.

Religions themselves – religious institutions and organisations, which play an important role in the processes of integration and adaptation of migrants – are not neutral in terms of gender, and apply different rules for women and men. The teachings of religions with regard to gender can be understood in reference to two dimensions. The first is the symbolic dimension, encompassing discursive definitions of femininity and masculinity within theology and religious doctrine. The second is the structural dimension, defined by religious

law (e.g. Catholic canonical law) as well as by various informal rules taking into account the place of women and men in organisational structures. Whereas symbolic constructs are relatively constant, as they are usually linked to religious tradition and theology, which in monotheistic religions are slow to change, religious structure and organisation are characterised by significant variability and are dependent on the cultural context – or, more broadly, on the social environment in which they exist. As a result, in religious organisations that operate in new migration contexts, circumstances favourable to the negotiation of gender roles and the constitution of new gendered rules and division of duties often occur. Such mechanisms lie at the basis of the redefinitions of the roles of women and men in Muslim migrant communities in Poland, most of whom migrated to Poland from Arab countries, as discussed by Maria Stojkow in her research report *Polish Ummah? The Action Taken by Muslim Migrants to Set up Their World in Poland*. Grażyna Szymańska-Matusiewicz follows a similar path in her contribution to this special section, *Political Power, Religion and Gender: the Case of the Vietnamese in Poland*. Szymańska-Matusiewicz's article, the result of many years of anthropological observation, illustrates the religious gender practices and power relations that regulate the functioning of the Vietnamese communities at two Buddhist pagodas in Poland. Szymańska-Matusiewicz places her analysis in a wider comparative context, outlining the broader historical-political context and comparing the results with data from other countries, such as the USA and Germany.

In view of the increasingly evident presence of anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe, the significance of such feelings for the social construction of the collective identities of host countries is becoming an important topic in migration research. Reflections on this topic are all the more valuable when the comparison concerns culturally and religiously homogeneous countries like Poland and Hungary. Elżbieta M. Goździak and Péter Márton examine this subject in the article *Where the Wild Things Are: Fear of Islam and the Anti-Refugee Rhetoric in Hungary and in Poland*, which compares the discourses on the refugee crisis in the two countries. The authors show that the discursive construction of the Other, which by definition threatens the existing gender order due to its cultural and religious difference, serves to consolidate strongly gendered articulations of Polish and Hungarian collective identity.

While they by no means constitute an exhaustive study of all the issues concerning migration, religion and gender in Central and Europe, we believe that the articles in this section explore and highlight certain interesting topics. We hope that the section will mark an important contribution to the continuing debate and inspire additional research in this field.

Notes

¹ In the USA, research has been conducted on ethnic parishes since the 1950s, examining the role of religious organisations at the level of local communities in the integration (or the lack thereof) of migrants into wider society. However, these studies remain at the level of ethnographic descriptions, and do not engage in theoretical reflection on the connection between these areas.


Funding


The article and the editing of the thematic section in this issue of CEEMR were made possible by a SONATA BIS grant from the Polish National Science Centre, *Gender as a Factor Distinguishing Religious Organisations. Social Practices of Gender and Their Interpretations in Polish Catholic Mission Organisations in England, Sweden and Belgium*, no. 2014/14/E/HS6?00327.


Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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How to cite this article: Leszczyńska K., Urbańska S., Zielińska K. (2018). Religion and Gender in Migration to and from Central and Eastern Europe – Introductory Reflections. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* 7(2): 105–110.

Assessing the Significance of Religion in Gender and Migration Studies: New Avenues for Scholarly Inquiry

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In this article I discuss the need for more systematic integration of approaches dealing with religious beliefs and practices into the discussion about sources and areas of gender social changes that occur in global migration. Firstly, starting from the discussion about negative representations of religiosity in contemporary debates, I consider from theoretical and methodological perspectives why we should move the religious dimension from the margins more to the centre of analysis. Secondly, basing on an exploratory review of empirical research about intersections of religion and gender in the lives of international migrants, I discuss findings that reveal about religion as a potential mediator in the gendered revolution. I answer how they help to understand the complexities and ambivalences of social changes and identify the areas they concern. I argue that the revolutionary potential that arises at the intersection of migration, gender and religion is not limited to changing gender orders in religious organisations. It is religious beliefs themselves that influence migrants' everyday lives and challenge the existing gendered contract in lay areas, in work relations, civic and political participation.

Keywords: global migration; religion; gender; social changes; empowerment

Introduction

‘The certain importance that religious belief and practice has for millions of women around the world is one of the most important challenges for the human rights and reproductive health movements today’ (Freedman 1996: 66). This declaration was formulated two decades ago by Lynne Freedman, a feminist lawyer, who warned social activists against identifying growing religious fundamentalisms with the usual need for religiousness. This declaration can also be referenced today to the distance that still divides studies of religion and gender in global migration research. The question about the ‘gender revolution’ as a result of mass migration of women, first raised by Rhacell Salazar Parreñas (2001) in her prominent study of ‘global women servants’

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from the Philippines in Europe and the USA, then developed in hundreds of studies, has been rarely systematically investigated in relation to religion (Urbańska 2016). And it is despite the fact that most global migrant women come from the religious Global South or Central and Eastern Europe; and religiosity plays an important role in their everyday lives as part of their beliefs or values or as written in cultural patterns.

When Parreñas (2001) posed a question if we are facing the gendered revolution in migration, she referred its definition to the similar phenomenon of the mass transition of women – middle-class housewives in the USA and Western Europe – to the labour market since the late 1970s. Other sociologists, Arlie Russel Hochschild and Anne Machung (1989), asked whether this gendered change in the labour market – called the second shift – would change the relationship between women and men towards more democratic partnerships. Parreñas (2001) associated the contemporary global and pioneer economic migrations of wives and mothers from the Global South countries with that phenomenon of transition. And she asked if wider reconstruction of roles in households toward more egalitarian gender relations would follow that mass migration? Or maybe we were dealing with a real ‘gender revolution’ instead of the fiasco of renegotiating the new partnership – the so called ‘stalled revolution’ – as described by Hochschild and Machung (1989)? In what direction would this gender social change go? Answers to those questions in the first decades of research, since the 1990s, as shown by Stephanie Nawyn (2010), focused researchers’ interest almost exclusively on reproductive roles.

The separation of gender, migration and religion research areas was not only due to disciplinary divides within social sciences. Since the first wave of feminism, religion has been perceived rather as a primary force that ‘discriminates against women and subjugates them to male control’ (Ebaugh and Chafetz 1999: 586) than as an analytical dimension. Religious dogmas that legitimise power inequalities and underlie oppression of women – violence against them and denying women’s rights – present women as essentially inferior and morally weak (Mahler 2008: 265). In some European countries, such as Poland or Ireland, political history of liberal feminist movements is largely shaped in the fight against the role of Roman Catholic Church institutions in gender politics and power in these countries (Bobako 2017). Only in the recent decade one can observe significant changes that have exerted impact on migration studies. Firstly, the feminist reinterpretation of religion as a source of women’s empowerment has become more visible, mostly due to debates on multiculturalism (Leszczyńska 2016 Longman, Midden and van den Brandt 2012) or postcolonial critics of neoliberalism (Bobako 2017; Mahmood 2012). As Monica Mahler (2008: 266) pointed out in her article on religion, violence and women’s empowerment in Latin America: ‘The recognition of the complexity of both women’s multiple identities, including religious belonging, and religious traditions themselves, has led to an increasing challenge of the supposed irreconcilable rift between religion and women’s rights. Feminists are acknowledging religion as an internally contested and shifting cultural terrain like any other, a site of conflict in which many women struggle for increasing voice and authority’. Secondly, outbreak of numerous, scattered and rather descriptive field studies of religious immigrant organisations (e.g. Hüwelmeier 2010; Jackson 2013; Rey 2013; Williams 2008) as well as findings of transnational approach to global mobility constituted an important impulse for gendered approach in migration studies. First summarisations of these papers show various interesting processes of genderisation of immigrant religiosity and its empowering potential (Ryan and Vacchelli 2013). They revealed also ‘the ways religion is important for immigrants outside of religious organisations in social institutions, including civic organisations, families, workplaces, schools, and health-care organisations’ (Cadge and Ecklund 2007: 359). All of these has led to an increasing interest in a multidisciplinary and intersectional empirical research in migration studies and has initiated a theoretical debate on gendered change, religion and migration.

The goal of this article is a more systematic integration of religion into the discussion about a gendered social change and global migration. I contribute to the existing knowledge in two ways:

1. Firstly, starting from the discussion about the post-secular skepticism to the role of religion in contemporary world and stereotyping of religion in contemporary debates, I point out why we should include religion as one of the key dimensions of analysis to understand the complexity and ambivalence of gendered social change in global migration.
2. Secondly, I discuss what the existing empirical research of (trans)migrants reveals about religious issues as a potential mediator in the gendered social changes and identify the areas they concern. I argue that the potential for change that arises at the intersection of migration, gender and religion is not limited to changing gender orders in religious organisations. It is religious beliefs themselves that influence migrants' everyday lives and challenge the existing gendered contract in lay areas, in work relations, civic and political participation. Thus, the purpose of the article is a preliminary, exploratory review of this type of research.

Although the discussion about the relationship between religion and migration has become present in pioneer literature reviews, we are dealing with the general lack of systematic inquiry and review into the role of religion as a mediator in gendered changes experienced by global migrants. Therefore, the article is an attempt to answer Peggy Levitt's call to 'put religion front and center in our attempts to understand how identity and belonging are being redefined in this increasingly global world' (Levitt 2001: 26–27). It thus also addresses the call for a 'paradigm shift' with regard to the role of religion in every area of migration research (e.g. in refugee studies, see Goździak and Shandy 2002).

Lost in the post-secular skepticism

The reason for the slow development of research showing the relationship between religion and gender changes in migration has a wider background than feminist critics. On the one hand, social sciences are influenced by post-secular skepticism, on the other hand, the inclusion of religion in research in the context of its negative impact and misunderstandings prevails. I will discuss here these two phenomena in relation to gender and migration research.

Firstly, in the second half of the twentieth century the neglect of religion perspective on research agenda was explained by the skepticism of contemporary researchers in the field of social sciences as to the importance of religious beliefs and practices in the life of the individual in post-secular Europe and North America (Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000). Sociologist Peggy Levitt, who advocates giving more recognition to the role of religiosity and spirituality in everyday life of migrants (a 'lived religion' approach) refers to 'post-secular skepticism' in the following way: 'Until recently, the script went something like this. We live in a secular world where religion is an aberration rather than a normal part of daily life. Because surveys indicate that most people don't go to church on Sundays (except in the United States, where people do at higher levels than in any other country with a comparable standard of living), we confidently declared that religion was of little importance. But, of course, that failed to take into account the deep ways in which religion is embedded in bricks and mortar' (Levitt 2012: 2).

We encounter a similar situation in the field of studies of gender and social change in migration, which has been developing for more than two decades, and its fruit is a huge number of publications on migrants from around the world. Analysing the leading research perspectives and research summaries, it is difficult not to notice that research rarely places religious and spirituality issues among methodological and theoretical approaches dealing with gendered roles changing. The answer to the question pertaining to the specifics and directions of gender and social changes is primarily sought in the context of global economic inequalities, which result in the reconstruction of care work markets and gender orders. The most important research areas

focus on the new professional position of women, new gender orders in the family and communities within the context of transnational life ('here and there'), patterns of reconstruction of caring roles and family identities in mobility. However, the marginal presence of analyses of the role of religious beliefs and practices in gender and social change processes in migrations is a kind of paradox if we realise that many researchers collect data in religious organisations where migrants can be found (Urbańska 2016).

When we pose questions about gendered revolution in the area of family, care and work, but also in public life, the broadly understood religious dimension should take a more important place in research. It is difficult to imagine renegotiations of gender rules without mediation of religious beliefs and practices as well as its structures. Even when a person is not religious, he cannot escape the pressures and cultural demands. Thus, gender rules are very closely related to religiosity. Many studies point to the direct relationship between religious values and gender roles. Patriarchal attitudes, for example, are strongly associated with the Christian tradition. The foundation of this tradition on masculinised culture has influenced the validation of differences in relations between men and women, which is reflected in identifying the role of women with caring and the sphere of the home rather than the place on the labour market (Sherkat 2000 and Hofstede 1980, 1991, after: Voicu 2009: 145). Thus, how will these relations change in a new context, when migration as an important modernisation mechanism favours secularisation (Voicu 2009) and provides more new opportunities as well as new constraints for the 'doing gender' (Mahler and Pessar 2001)?

Secondly, the problem with the skeptical approach and the tendency to neglect religious and spirituality dimensions in research agendas becomes serious when it concerns migrants for whom these spheres are important empowerment components of identity and practice. This problem has deeper causes, related to another problematic issue – namely one-sided, reductionist and/or politically negative and stereotypical understanding of religion. As some of authors point out, the category of religion appears in the analysis primarily in the context of its destructive role in social processes. This is related to reducing the significance of religion to the main source of today's social conflicts (Goździak and Shandy 2002: 130; Levitt 2012), especially in Europe, when the explosion of research on Islam has become a growth industry (Bobako 2017; Levitt 2012: 2; Lutz 1997; Szczepanikova 2012). The consequences of such reduction are substantial because the black and white image of religion entails the risk of colonisation of the Migrants Others. As Elżbieta Goździak and Dianna Shandy point out, it also brings the risk of politicisation of ethnic or other identities portrayed in essentialist religious ways (Goździak and Shandy 2002: 130). The essentialisation of migrants' identities in religious terms invalidates constructivist ways of creating different components of identities. It also invalidates other sources of social problems, such as class, racial, ethnic, gender and other rooted differences, inequalities as well as sources of discrimination. Consequently, it justifies the impassable differences between the host society and migrants, legitimises inequalities and social hierarchies (Goździak and Shandy 2002; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007), and as such becomes the technology of power (see Bobako 2017).

The problem of the politicised use of religion is expressed primarily in the debate about gender and migration. As Alicja Szczepanikowa, who researched Chechen refugees in refugee centres in various European countries – Germany, Poland, Austria – explains: 'The construction of migrant women as victims of their culture is commonly used to depict migrants as inherently different and less civilised in contrast to more liberal receiving societies' (Szczepanikova 2012: 479). Her research findings and approaches are in contrast to the stereotypically reductionist understanding (or rather misunderstanding) of the role of religion in the lives of migrants. Firstly, when she interpreted young women's turn to stricter and less egalitarian gender roles, she avoided the popular essentialist pattern of seeing the culture of religion as inherently patriarchal and oppressive. She explained that even if patriarchal norms remain relatively persistent, they undergo some level of transformation and reinvention. They are not rigid, especially under conditions of migration and/or life in transnational settings. Migrants can apply very different gender practices, even if they come from the same

groups equally constrained by patriarchal norms. As such, she avoided 'the ideological dichotomy between the roles of religion as either facilitating or obstructing the incorporation of immigrant minorities into mainstream society and culture' (Szczepanikova 2012: 187), which permeates the debate surrounding gender and migration. Instead, she focuses on showing the role of contexts and agency. Secondly, she goes beyond ethnocentric interpretative approaches explaining the role of religion in coping with trauma (in the same way as the pioneering work of Goździak (2002) and Goździak and Shandy (2002)), 'for the civilian population, who experienced tremendous losses, including that of control over their own life, turning to God was often seen as the only way to cope with events that surpassed the limits of logic. Conditions of prolonged instability produce a tendency to cling to institutions that are most resilient at times of crisis. Together with faith, the extended family was a crucial source of support during the wars' (Szczepanikova 2012: 482).

The risk of colonisation becomes clearer when we acknowledge the constructivist nature of religion and look at it also as a source of agency. Monica Mahler notes that after criticism of religion as a main source of women's oppression in the first and second waves of feminist movements one can observe a turning point. Religion 'is now being reinterpreted as a critical source of women's empowerment' (Mahler 2008: 265). Religiosity can be, therefore, not only a mechanism reproducing the existing order of power, including the gender regimes, but also a source of strength and agency, so that such existing order can be changed in various ways from the inside or from external positions (Woodhead 2013). A lot of research has shown the patterns in which women use religion and its organisations to contend for egalitarianism as spaces in which to raise feminist consciousness with others (Ebaugh and Chafetz 1999: 586–587). In turn, other gender and religion studies often show spirituality, and religious practices and beliefs as the only source of agency and empowerment for the excluded. For example, anthropologist of gender and religion, Agnieszka Kościańska (2009), stresses that the older generations of Polish women, who were the victims of the most-excluded mechanisms of the post-socialist transformation to the greatest extent, found the only source of agency in religiousness and community-related practices connected with it. Thus, the contemporary research on religion conceptualises it as 'internally contested and shifting cultural terrain like any other, a site of conflict in which many women struggle for an increasing voice and authority' (Mahler 2008: 266). Strong attention is also paid to the analysis of ambivalences and internal contradictions of gaining empowerment in religious organisations, when religion favours the secondary status of women as compared to men and at the same time empowers women, which is not mutually exclusive (Ebaugh and Chafetz 1999; Leszczyńska 2016). This approach entails breaking the 'myth of a monolithic homogeneous' religion (Freedman 1996: 59, 66) and results in a more inclusive definition of religion (Goździak and Shandy 2002). The problems are, therefore, the simplifications and the lack of nuanced conceptual apparatus in relation to the ways of defining religion. As Levitt explains: 'We could see religion not as a stable set of beliefs and practices rooted in a particular time and space but as contingent clusters that come together within to-be-determined spaces that are riddled by power and interests. The resulting assemblages – made up of actors, objects, technology and ideas – travel at different rates and rhythms across the different levels and scales of the social fields in which they are embedded' (Levitt 2012).

To sum up, more serious dealing with the dimension of religiosity in the intersectional analyses of gender and migration could more fully reveal the various dimensions of agency. This would help to solve the problem that Floya Anthias and Maja Cederberg (2010: 28) call the homogenisation of the experiences of migrant women, as well as to avoid the risk of colonisation or the orientalised identities of migrant women. It would also help to re-examine the processes of secularisation in the context of migration.

Religion as a mediator in social change – the review of empirical gender and migration research

It is not easy to answer the question pertaining to where the phenomena related to religion and religiosity already occur in empirical migration research, and, above all, which phenomena related to gender are perceived in this scope. The first analyses summarising the empirical research achievements at the intersection of religion and migration have appeared only recently. In all these analyses, researchers paid attention to the importance of the phenomenon of genderisation of religion or its mediation in social changes (Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Ebaugh and Chafetz 1999; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007; Yang and Ebaugh 2001). However, such research is still scarce. There are only a few special issues (e.g. Bonifacio and Angeles 2010; Goździak and Shandy 2002; Longman, Midden and van den Brandt 2012; Ryan and Vacchelli 2013), a few books (e.g. Bobako 2017; Levitt 2012) and, above all, scattered, single case studies (e.g. Goździak 2002; Hüwelmeier 2010; Jackson 2013; Rey 2013; Williams 2008). Although they are very few, they answer the key question of this article whether and how different aspects of religiosity mediate in social change at the intersection of migration and gender. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that it will still be a picture that is not complete, because the issue of religion began to be the subject of a broader interest in migration research only in the 1990s and since then has been developing rather slowly (Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Ebaugh and Chafetz 1999; Yang and Ebaugh 2001). As a matter of fact, if religion has already been studied, it is usually within the framework of specific 'religious organisations started and/or attended by immigrants (...) rather than of the social institutions, families, workplaces, health-care organisations or other social institutions' micro contexts focused on individuals' experiences outside of religious gatherings. A "lived religion" approach that focuses on immigrants' stories and experiences in a range of social spheres is relatively new to this area of research' (Cadge and Ecklund 2007: 360). The available studies are primarily monographic, descriptive papers, documenting the activities of small, ethnic religious assemblies of immigrants. There is no comparative analysis synthesising the accumulated knowledge. Despite everything, the review of available monographs allows to chart patterns.

Literature analysis will be divided into three sections. In the first section, I will discuss gendered changes through religion as the effect of top-down pressure. I will present new functions and positions in lay and religious organisations in migration processes as the effect of the pressure of new macro- and mezo- structures. In the second section, I will depict gendered changes through religion as the effect of bottom-up pressure. I will describe the influence of beliefs and practices on creating and redefining gendered roles in lay and religious organisations in migration processes. The last section will focus on the unnoticed role of religion in reproduction of global gendered division of markets.

Gendered changes through religion as the effect of top-down pressure. New functions and positions in lay and religious organisations in migration processes

One of the key areas in the field of migration research is the analysis of gender changes in functioning of lay and religious organisations in relation to the analogical ones in the countries of origin. Here the attention is paid to different positions of women and men as the initiators of these changes, which results from their new, different position on the labour market and new patterns of activity that open spaces for both empowerment and re-traditionalisation.

Firstly, the basic dimension of the study of the organisational changes of religious and secular institutions is also an attempt to understand how diversely these institutions mediate in the process of integration of women and men into a new country. Most monographs document a huge role of religious organisations in providing formal and informal social assistance to immigrants. Such actions are taken not so much by professional clergymen but by secular people gathered around religious institutions. And as a number of studies show, these

are largely women who in volunteering find the possibility to fulfill the role of devoted carers. Additionally, women seek support and help in the care and education of their offspring, which are obtained through entering and acting in social networks centered around religious organisations. Wider than in the countries of origin, the non-religious function of the parish and mission covers the whole range of informal support including help in finding a flat or a job, school and care for children in the case of childbirth, illness or death, education of children in their native language, and even starting their own business and taking mortgages. This is especially important for families of economic migrants working in the lowest sectors of the labour market and, therefore, experiencing multiple exclusions. Bankston and Zhou (1995, 1996) argue that Vietnamese children and their carers receive protection and support in religious organisations that mediate educational success and better adaptation to American society. Researchers of the Chinese working-class immigrant communities in New York's Chinatown show that the access to such a friendly space is important, especially for teenage immigrants who are vulnerable to 'dangerous and destructive behavior patterns'. Networks gathered around local churches play roles similar to foster families, in which they receive social, financial and caring support, which facilitates the process of social promotion to the middle class (Cao 2005; Guest 2003).

Sometimes the differences in defining gendered migration functions of religious organisations are so large among religious organisations in the countries of origin and in the sending countries of migrants that some of the organisations significantly loosen the ties linking them with their headquarters. This is the case especially when the religious organisations operating in an immigration country have less patriarchal structures than in the migrants' home countries. In such a situation, religion is an empowering resource for migrants, from which they draw strength and legitimacy for change. It is not uncommon to see splits related to a different vision of gendered relationships and practices. Gertrud Hüwelmeier (2014), who describes the trans-nationalisation of life in convents from historical and gendered perspectives points out how non-European branches of women's orders at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries started to gradually become independent from their headquarters and from mothers superiors themselves. This strengthened the reforms that took place in the 1960s after the Second Vatican Council, which were to support the missionary functions of religious orders. Describing the American branches of the first generations of nuns migrating to the USA from the 'Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ' convent in Germany, Hüwelmeier (2012) shows that the symbol of struggle to abolish the hierarchy and of the fight for the new idea of sisterhood and independence was the question of wearing civilian clothes instead of habits and owning one's own hierarchy. Migrant nuns fought for egalitarian relations with their superiors in Germany. However, the anthropologist remarks that this process of individualisation primarily concerned non-European branches of orders in which sent nuns got gradually individualised or where nuns from indigenous communities of Africa, Asia, and South America entered and struggled to take into account their cultural differences. Hüwelmeier (2014) describes the protests of indigenous Hindus who fought to break the ethnocentrism of their prioress. They wanted to introduce local cultural patterns, a ritual of sitting instead of kneeling, eating meals prepared in accordance with rules of the Hindu cuisine instead of the German one.

New immigrant practices change functions and related gender orders in institutions originating in the countries of origin. For example, in the USA, underlyingly hierarchical immigrant churches have a tendency to transform with time into small congregations, associations with rather direct, horizontal relationships and different, far more egalitarian gender relations. This is the effect of the influence of American culture based on congregationalism (Warner and Wittner 1998; Yang and Ebaugh 2001). And although many of these congregations are still run by professional clergymen, from one year to another secular leaders, particularly female leaders, occupy an increasingly important central place. In the new context, rituals, practices and styles of prayer are also changing (Yang and Ebaugh 2001). This is especially true for young organisations. Migrants then transfer such changes to the countries of origin. American research of migrants from South America shows that they play a major role in exporting the idea of congregationalism to the places they have left behind.

Secondly, when we ask about new gender positions (and orders) in organisations, the answer is that we often deal with hybrid strategies. On the one hand, women in religious organisations reproduce traditional ethnic culture while, on the other hand, more and more frequently take up high and prestigious positions there, which men would not be able to or do not want to hold. Ebaugh and Chafetz (1999) noticed such patterns while examining thirteen religious organisations in the American city of Houston. They also noticed that men activate themselves for their communities only when they lose their class status. In turn, Jolly and Reeves (2005) remind that even if men are active in their ethnic organisations, they usually choose those whose policies are targeted at activities in their countries of origin. The explanation for this is a worse adaptation of men to life in immigration countries. This is confirmed, in particular, by the research on the first generation of American immigrants from South America. It shows that for Latin men immigration is associated with the must to undertake jobs below their qualifications, deskilling and degrading mobility down the social ladder, which is, among others, the consequence of racism-related segregation on the American labour market. This results in the reluctance of Latin men to settle and the feeling that their stay is temporary, even if they have spent many years abroad. The reluctance to engage in local activities is, therefore, the result of such experiences. However, the experiences of women, i.e. wives of immigrants, are completely different. With migration, women experience mobility up the social ladder and gain relative independence. This involves gaining access to paid activities, even if they are still related to caring and cleaning. In addition, the caring roles that they perform in their households as wives and mothers involve them more effectively in the life of local communities integrated around schools, playgrounds, social welfare and religious organisations. All this translates into a better adaptation to the new environment and into the reluctance to return to the home country. Women are more likely than men to engage in activities of religious organisations that solve local problems (Hardy-Fanta 1993) and much more often than men obtain US citizenship (Jones-Correa 1998). Mehrdad Darvishpour (2002) who examines cases of patriarchal Iranian families living in the egalitarianism-oriented Sweden noticed a similar phenomenon. The researcher stresses that mothers want to integrate more closely with the culture and society of the country that has become their new home than men. This may be seen on the example of different approaches to raising daughters, who are much more restricted by their fathers. The author emphasises that ‘in many immigrant families men live in the past, women in the present, and children in the future’ (Darvishpour 2002: 14). He also adds that ‘those who, as a result of migration, seem to lose the most from their social and family positions, try to cultivate most the least changed traditional social and family relationships’ (Darvishpour 2002: 14, after: Muszel 2013: 92). Therefore, new women’s positions related to their involvement in the activities of ethnic churches and religious congregations can be perceived as exemplification of new positions that women hold not only in the labour market, but also in the public sphere.

Gendered changes through religion as the effect of bottom-up pressure. Beliefs, practices and roles in lay and religious organisations in migration processes

The changes in gender positions and functions in religious organisations imply also changes in secular institutions that are closely related to them, such as family institutions and broadly defined gender roles. Susanna Calkings’ (2005) research on the Quaker communities reveals that transnational mothers, who completely revolutionised the institution of motherhood and gender systems in their communities, existed as early as in the 17th century. These were female Quakers – wives and mothers – who independently and on their own initiative, following their vocation, went on long-term foreign missions. The revolution they initiated was spectacular – they managed to create something like the role of substitute mothers in the community, and their role of the woman who is also a mother transposed into the legitimate and admired role of the spiritual mother

of the community. Certainly, these were not such mass migrations as modern ones of women workers, transnational wives and mothers who leave behind their families in the country of origin for many years. There were few female Quakers who went on missions abroad and their trips were perceived as pioneering even in their communities. However, these cases show a huge role of religion as a means of legitimating migration (*push factor*) and institutional changes and, as shown above, of maternal practices and changes in gender patterns of sending communities.

Similar processes may be found in modern research. Anthropologist Catharina Williams (2008), who researched domestic workers from Indonesia, showed how religious beliefs and spirituality can serve women as a source of power in transforming patriarchal role models and home positions assigned to women in the community. Women justify their intention to emigrate in front of the patriarchal Others: fathers, husbands and members of local communities by giving references to the will of God and the traditional role of women as caregivers. This is even the case when migration is associated with ‘impurity’, as immoral, contested space especially for women. ‘In addition to promising to help with the family income, young women use their beliefs and faith to persuade fathers to let them go. They convince the family that God will look after them as they follow God’s will to help the family’ (Williams 2008: 348). The search for sources of legitimation of such a change only in the dimension of a new division of care work in a migratory household – and therefore excluding religion as it is done in most research of this type in the world – would not give an answer why such projects were successful. The transforming role of religion at every stage of migration is best summarised by Williams herself: ‘Women told stories of how throughout the process of migration they drew strength from their religious belief as a way of coping and enduring any hardships. For them, their faith provided a support through the transformative process of migration and stepping beyond the purview of their domestic supports and constraints. The way that women’s agency emerges through this process and the shifting sense of self that it entails (Gibson 2001; Gibson-Graham 2006) must be taken into account in increasing our conceptual understanding of female international migration’ (Williams 2008: 348). Needless to say, the religious components of motives for migration should be included in the analysis of push-pull factors. Unfortunately, their presence is still rare.

The role of religion in reproduction of global gendered division of markets

Some studies include secular contexts in the analyses on the role of religion in migration by focusing on the mutual relations between religious organisations and the gendered labour market. Both these spheres, as shown by empirical studies (e.g. Małek 2008; Jackson 2013; Rey 2013; Williams 2008), reproduce each other and become important interlinked (but not visible) sites of ongoing gendered social change in migration.

Firstly, new gendered religious identities that can be redefined in exile are also created as a reaction to the experience of exclusion, invisibility and life at the margins of the receiving society. Agnieszka Małek (2008), who researched Polish women working as domestic workers in Rome, points out that some women become religious only in exile. The experience of loneliness, separation from family, hard work, illegality of stay, work and residence, as well as negative experiences with employers and isolation of carers working in households result in many women seeking a meaning of life in religion, beginning to identify with saint figures such as St Mary or Jesus and in engaging in the life of Polish religious communities. Catharina Williams (2008) writes about a similar situation. Domestic workers from Indonesia described in her papers carry out individual and common religious rituals, worship services and prayers as a coping mechanism at every stage of migration, especially when confronted with hardship in the domestic work sector. ‘The women agreed that they drew affirmation through the religious rituals and social activities together and described them as strengthening their bonds as “a family”’. They seemed to obtain comfort, security and a sense of belonging (Ozorak 1996) and often referred to each other as “sisters”’ (Williams 2008: 350). Such strategies ‘represent proactive decision-making

and awareness in facing a challenging situation' (Kwilecki 2004; Pargament 1997). It may be said that religion is an important symbolic resource for the growing global class of the proletariat helping to cope with new living conditions, class position and cross-exclusion. Such strategies certainly reveal what else, apart from economic factors, affects the survival and reproduction of global markets of care work. For example, Vivianne Jackson (2013) shows how the responsibility for another person and the ethics of caring – stemming from religious beliefs and gender role design – delay the decision of Filipino migrants in Israel to abandon the work of a caregiver of elderly people. Religious beliefs are, therefore, an important source of mediation in the decision taken by migrants whether to leave or return to their homeland.

However, even in secular organisations, e.g. when workers' rights are violated and when migrants are discriminated against, religion may be the resource used to contest the existing institutional order. Williams (2008) points out how faith helps domestic workers from Indonesia in negotiating their borders and workers' rights. It is the basic resource of social movements, it mobilises for protests, as in the case of Mexican Catholicism. It becomes a political and moral resource used by individuals or secular and religious organisations to articulate political resistance, e.g. the protests of migrant workers at the border between Mexico and the USA (Hondagneu-Sotelo, Gaudinez, Lara and Ortiz 2004).

Goździak and Shandy (2002) point out the key issue of the empowering role of religion by discussing its importance in coping with trauma in refugees. Therefore, they critically compare the approach to trauma treatment present in refugee centres based on secular Western behavioural science with indigenous approaches to human suffering, including religious and spiritual beliefs and postulate a 'paradigm shift' that includes religion as an important dimension of social research and practice (Goździak and Shandy 2002: 131).

Secondly, new strategies of actions taken by clergy and secular female volunteers in religious organisations are often a response to new gender regimes. Precisely the relationship between masculinity and femininity that are formed in exile and mediated by labour markets. And this relation is often perceived as a threat to old accepted systems. Anthropologists, such as Gertrude Hüwelmeier, who examines the lives of Vietnamese immigrants living in Berlin, as well as researchers dealing with various African varieties of the Pentecostal Church in Europe, draw attention to the connection of the transformation of church structures and the existing patterns of gender practices and images with the new gendered experiences of migrants. Churches and congregations take over the role of negotiators of the existing gender systems and relationships between spouses put at risk in exile (Hüwelmeier 2010, 2013; Rey 2013). The Swiss Church of Pentecostals from Ghana and Congo begins to specialise in intense rituals of purifying women and men allegedly seduced, and visited by demons in exile (*spirit spouses, mermaids*). According to the beliefs of practitioners and clergymen, these demons spoil family relationships and marriages, or do not allow single people to find a husband or a wife. Churches become real therapeutic centres for marriages and couples being subjected to a crisis in exile. Interestingly, the reason for such a crisis is often a new, gender-diverse situation in the labour market, where it is harder for men to find a job, in contrast to women who are doing better and having better chances of finding a job in care. The empowerment of women entails a change in roles in intimate and family relationships, which is difficult to accept by men. And men more and more often experience the degradation of status in relation to the position before departure as well as social invisibility. The crisis of masculinity in this situation is expressed in the sense of being visited by female demons and the need for religious rituals of purification. In this context, churches, in addition to becoming a place for establishing intimate relationships for lonely couples, are important to such an extent that they reconstruct ethnic ties and begin to implement therapeutic and healing functions. This new type of practice and specialisation, marginal or absent in churches in African countries of origin, becomes a tool for managing relations and gender in emigration (Rey 2013). The same happens with Buddhist temples examined by Hüwelmeier (2013) in Berlin or Szymańska-Matusiewicz (2018, in this volume) in Poland. They are largely funded and built by female Vietnamese entrepreneurs who often deal with

business better than men. The position of female funders, organisers and volunteers working for temples significantly changes their position within the religious structures in the country of immigration, in relation to the conservative structures of organisations in Vietnam.¹

Conclusion

In the study of social change pertaining to gender in migration processes, the religious dimension appears relatively rarely. And if it does appear, it usually takes the form of the assumption that men and women come from conservative religious backgrounds and cultures and can free themselves from these cultures by means of migration. The review of the few studies that include religiosity reveals a number of phenomena that make it easier to understand migration processes, especially the intrinsic complexity and ambivalence of changes at the intersection of gender and migration. It may be clearly seen that often this agency ingrained in religiousness and spirituality, but also capitals associated with belonging to religious organisations, can catalyse change leading to egalitarianism. Such studies reveal a more complete picture of agency; a religious resource, i.e. beliefs, practices, affiliations are at the core of coping strategies at every stage of migration. Despite this, they are rarely included in the analysis of migration motivations (*push-pull theory*). What is more, including these dimensions also allows us to go beyond the limitations formulated by Maria Kontos, Krystyna Slany and Maria Liapi (2010). The researchers assessing the state of literature in the studies on gender and migration point out that ‘despite a wide range of literature on migrant women, migration research is still based on gender stereotypes. This results in migrants being perceived through their reproductive roles, which has far-reaching consequences for their social representation’ (Kontos, Slany and Liapi 2010: 12). Therefore, drawing attention to the mezo level, which concerns the gendered changes in migrant religious organisations in relation to new gender positions on the labour market, in the migrant family and community, reveals how and why migrants become involved in civic and political activity. Here, the intersection of gender and religion can help us understand things like access to rights or social services, claims to citizenship, or the issues of labour and mobility. It also provides understanding of how empowerment in the labour market of the host country in relation to the position in the country of origin affects the reorganisation of traditional religious structures, i.e. new, often leadership, positions being taken up by women within such structures. Such research would therefore give the opportunity to show a fuller agency and image of gendered change in migration than only for the secular migration roles of wives and mothers or the atomised global community of servants. If our research skipped the dimension of religion as intermediates in renegotiations of global migrants’ new belongings, we would lose sight of the dimension where perhaps the most important gender and social change occurs. Considering religion and gender together would help us understand aspects of migration that have otherwise gone unnoticed or have been addressed in problematic ways.

Notes

¹ Unfortunately, analyses of network relationships linking local religious centres with their broader macro structures are published very rarely (Cadge and Ecklund 2007: 363). It is difficult to summarise to what extent these structural changes are permanent and turned into ever higher levels. An in-depth comparative research as well as research of the transnational perspective that will take into account transnational contexts and gendered migration regimes is much needed.

Funding

The article was created as part of the SONATA BIS grant financed by the NCN: *Gender As Factor Differencing Religious Organisations. Gendered Social Practices and Their Interpretations in the Polish Catholic Mission Organisations in England, Sweden and Belgium*, no. 2014/14/E/HS6/00327.

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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How to cite this article: Urbańska S. (2018). Assessing the Significance of Religion in Gender and Migration Studies: New Avenues for Scholarly Inquiry. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* 7(2): 111–124.

Where the Wild Things Are: Fear of Islam and the Anti-Refugee Rhetoric in Hungary and in Poland

Elżbieta M. Goździak*, Péter Márton**

Based on empirical research conducted in Hungary and Poland in 2016–2017, as well as on analysis of social media, blogs and newspaper articles, this article discusses Hungarian and Polish attitudes towards Muslims and Islam. Against a historical background, we analyse how the Hungarian and Polish governments responded to the large-scale influx of Muslim refugees during the 2015 ‘migration crisis’. The anti-immigrant narratives, fueled by both governments and the right-wing press, resulted in something akin to Islamophobia without Muslims. Instead of portraying the people arriving at the southern border of Europe as refugees seeking safety, they described the migration process in terms such as ‘raid’, ‘conquest’ and ‘penetration’. These narratives often implied that Muslims will combat Europe not only with terrorism but with the uterus of their women, who will bear enough children to outnumber native Poles and Hungarians. The paper ends with a discussion of positive attempts to improve attitudes towards refugees in Poland and Hungary.

Keywords: Islamophobia; gender; nationalism; Poland; Hungary

Introduction

The current ‘refugee crisis’ in Europe has resulted in public discussions about the threat that Muslim refugees pose to the Christian identity of the continent. The debates are especially fervent in the new accession countries in Central Europe. The expansion of the European Union (EU) eastwards meant an incorporation of countries whose values might not entirely align with the European ‘norm’. What we are currently seeing in Europe is a need to balance the EU’s security interests on the one hand and the interests of the development of democracy and the protection of human rights on the other.

In this article, we explore anti-immigrant narratives in Hungary and Poland, where the current Islamophobia without Muslims (Górak-Sosnowska 2016) is reminiscent of anti-Semitism without Jews (see Darnton 1981;

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Snyder 2017). The exploratory study that informs this paper is part of the first author's ongoing research agenda on attitudes towards 'The Other' (see Goździak and Nowak 2012) as well as a new project on norms and values in the European migration and refugee crisis (see the project website <http://novamigra.eu/>). The data sources that form the basis of this article include a literature review of articles published both in peer-reviewed journals and in the Polish and Hungarian popular press and an analysis of narratives posted on Hungarian and Polish social media (Facebook, Twitter, various Listservs). In Hungary, we monitored the Facebook page of 'ELÉG' (Enough) over a period of two weeks: one week prior and one week after the referendum asking Hungarians to vote whether the country should accept refugees. During this period, page administrators posted between 1 to 10 posts each day, with posting frequency drastically decreasing following the referendum. The last posts to be published on the page prior to 9 pm were recorded, since we assumed that users would be the most active during the evening hours. In Poland, we monitored *Cudzoziemiec – taki sam człowiek jak ty, TAK dla uchodźców* and *NIE dla rasizmu i ksenofobii*. These outlets regularly post articles from local Polish newspapers as well as information about legal action taken against Poles who physically or verbally attacked foreigners. We have also monitored websites such as *londynek.net*, *dublinek.net* and *Moja Norwegia*, where Poles living abroad comment on the migration situation in both Poland and in the countries of their current residence.

Additionally, we conducted some 20 face-to-face ethnographic interviews and several informal conversations with policy-makers and representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) assisting or advocating on behalf of refugees and other forced migrants in Hungary and Poland. The interviews and conversations were conducted in Hungarian, Polish and English depending on the respondents' choice of primary language. Often, the interviews were carried out in a mixture of English and Hungarian or English and Polish. They lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and the informal conversations included both brief encounters lasting a few minutes and longer discussions of 30–60 minutes. In general, the interviewees talked to us 'off the record' and were reluctant to be tape-recorded or cited by name or even institutional affiliation. This is understandable, especially in Hungary, where the Fidesz government has consistently attacked civil society organisations working in the field of migration over previous years. Indeed, following his recent re-election, Viktor Orbán has revamped a legislative proposal for a Russian-style civil society law that would have organisations aiding 'illegal migration' registered as foreign agents, subject to national security screening, and the confiscation of 25 per cent of funds received from abroad (Than 2018).

In analysing the collected materials, we aimed to systematically discover themes and any special characteristics of messages (e.g. particular phrases and, in verbal communication, tone of voice) and to identify the way, in which messages changed over time and varied across mediums and outlets. This analysis was both observational and narrative in nature and relied less on the experimental elements normally associated with scientific research (reliability, validity and generalisability); however, it was particularly productive to pose further hypotheses and research questions (see Downe-Wamboldt 1992; Krippendorff 1989, 2004; Neuendorf 2002).

Theoretically, this research draws on the work of scholars such as Miller-Idriss (2009), Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008), and Wodak, de Cilia, Reisigl and Liebhart (1999), who are using qualitative interviews to capture ordinary people's articulations of the nation, national identity and national belonging. We have also used the concept of 'The Other' to frame both the data collection and the analysis. This is a concept that is particularly familiar to anthropologists. 'As merchants of the exotic, we have confronted the problem of representing the Other since long before the word was spelled with a capital O' (Sax 1998: 292). The concepts of nation and national identity have played a key role in the anthropological definition of 'The Other' as an object of study. Given the typical emphasis on culture in anthropology, it could be argued that the underlying concept of nation was that of nation-as-people as opposed to nation as a nation-state. Indeed, the relationship between national identity and attitude towards foreigners is determined by the social representation of the nation – i.e. the shared

images and beliefs about the national in-group and its relationship to other foreigners (van Dijk 1993). In the case of an ethnic-cultural representation – involving a vision of the nation as a community of people sharing a common cultural heritage – we can expect an intense identification with the nation to coincide with negative attitudes toward foreigners, the latter being perceived as a threat to the national culture. Conversely, in the case of civic representation – involving a vision of the nation as a dynamic community of equal citizens who are bound by and committed to a basic contract irrespective of their cultural heritage – an intense national identity can be expected to coincide with a positive attitude toward foreigners (Billiet, Maddens and Beerten 2003: 242).

Polish and Hungarian history is filled with stories of ‘us’ and ‘them’ and recurring conflicts with enemies who have threatened the countries’ autonomy (Davies 1981). Zdzisław Mach (1993, 1997) emphasises the importance of the idea of sovereignty in the formation of Polish national identity. Jan Kubik (1994) points out the power of national symbols in the fight against the communist state in the 1980s. Katherine Verdery (1996) concurs that, before 1989, the dynamics of identity construction in Eastern Europe were characterised by sharp distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (see also Haraszti 1978; Holy 1996; Lampland 1995; Ries 1997; Wedel 1986) but that, prior to 1989, the state or the Communist Party was labelled ‘them’ while the label ‘us’ was reserved for ‘the people’. This distinction seems to apply well to post-1956 Hungary, where János Kádár, who took part in launching the anti-Soviet revolution alongside Imre Nagy, betrayed the cause of the revolution only to become Hungary’s new dictator with Soviet backing. In essence, transitioning from the ‘us’ group to the socialist nomenclature of the region (Szegő 2012).

In the present article, we explore the question of how public discussions about religion and gender are used to support Poland’s and Hungary’s anti-refugee stance. We argue that, in addition to religion, Central Europeans use women – both Muslim refugee women and native Central European women – as pawns in the anti-refugee debates. The anti-Muslim narratives often invoke the need to protect ‘our women’ from the ‘wild’ and ‘barbaric Muslim men’ who will rape them. ‘More Muslims means more rapes’, say young men who fashion themselves as protectors of ‘traditional family values’ (Wigura 2016: 1). The right-wing, Central European press has portrayed the recent influx of refugees seeking safety in Europe as a ‘raid’, a ‘conquest’ and ‘penetration’, asserting that Muslims will combat Europe not only with terrorism but also with the uterus of their women, who will bear enough children to outnumber native Poles and Hungarians. We juxtapose these sentiments with gender discrimination in the region. Opposition to progressive laws criminalising domestic violence and the implementation of laws curtailing women’s access to reproductive health, supported and promoted by the Catholic Church and the Law and Justice Party in Poland and the Fidesz government in Hungary, are defended as the protection of ‘traditional family values’.

We begin this article with some historical context, including a discussion of the conceptualisation of national identity among Hungarian and Polish youth and a brief presentation of the position of Muslims in both countries. We then look at the 2015 ‘refugee crisis’, which sparked a fear of Islam and resulted in hostility towards Muslim refugees and immigrants. We finish the paper by setting out some positive strategies aimed at improving attitudes towards refugees in both Poland and Hungary.

Who is Hungarian, who is Polish?

The 1920 Treaty of Trianon¹ transformed Hungary from a multi-ethnic state where Magyars made up 50 per cent of the population into a state where Hungarians comprised 90 per cent of all citizens (Behr, Fata, Kulcsar, Lassu and Nagy 2002). Despite the change in the ethnic composition, Hungarians are obsessed with not losing their national identity (Csepeli and Örkény 2000) and see migration as a real threat to this *status quo*. Similarly,

for most of their history, the Polish people existed within a framework of multinational and multi-ethnic societies and polities. Before WWII, vast parts of Eastern Poland were inhabited by Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Belarussians. There were also significant numbers of Jewish and German minorities. The population census of 1931 showed that Poles constituted 68.9 per cent of the population (Grodź 2010). However, within five years of the end of WWII, Poland also became an ethnic monolith, with over 95 per cent of its population consisting of Polish Catholics (Curp 2006).

Many of the theories of national identity assert that nations are ‘not anything real, objective, or indispensable; they are only “constructs”, contingent and artificial, deliberately created’ (Walicki 1998: 611; see also Gellner 1983). Benedict Anderson (2006) wrote about nations as ‘imagined communities’ and Rogers Brubaker (1992, 1996) considered nations as ‘illusory or spurious communities’ that are constructed, contingent and fluctuating, rather than as ‘enduring components of social structure’. These assertions do not ring true in the public debates in Central Europe.

Two notions of what constitutes membership in a nation have been operating in contemporary Hungary and Poland. The first considers the ‘nation’ to be political and individualistic, where the ties between the individual and the state are civic in nature. Therefore, at least in principle, nationality can be achieved both by birth and by choice. This is what the German sociologist, Ferdinand Tönnies (1957), calls *Gesellschaft*. *Gesellschaft* is ‘determined by physical and spatial categorisation, can be delineated with strict (political) boundaries, generating political and economic integrity for the national community’ (Örkény 2005: 33). In the second meaning, ‘nation’ is collective and ethnic, and membership in a particular nation cannot be acquired except through blood and cannot be changed. This is what Tönnies calls *Gemeinschaft*. *Gemeinschaft* is based on cultural identification – common language, culture and history – irrespective of the geographical location of the members of the nation. Thus, members of the Magyar and Polish diaspora and their descendants belong to the Hungarian and Polish nations, respectively, despite the fact that they do not live or might not have even been born within the physical boundaries of the nation-state.

Cespeli and Örkény (2000) indicate that, in Hungary, younger, urban and well-educated Hungarians identify with the ‘state-oriented and political in nature’ concept of a nation, while rural, less-educated and older Hungarians tend to base their national identity on descent and cultural ties. Comparatively, Polish national identity has been historically constructed around cultural, religious and ethnic lines (Galent and Kubicki 2012). It seems, however, that, in some circles, the main traits of the Polish national identity shifted from ethnic elements towards civic ones after the 1989 transformation (Galent and Kubicki 2010). This shift has been the most prominent in large urban settings among college-educated young people. Many cities in Poland – Poznań, Wrocław and Cracow, among others – have become part of the network of open cities aimed at attracting human capital and integrating migrants. According to Galent and Kubicki (2010), it is this new, young and educated urban middle class that is assuming a more cosmopolitan identity and is cooperating and sometimes even competing with ‘The Others’ in the free market of material and cultural resources. However, they do not treat this competition through a prism of distrust and resentment. In contrast, young people with less education seem to be at the forefront of creating national identity based on blood, ancestry and ethnicity.

The national liberation and independence which Hungary and Poland have gained since 1989 have provided the impetus to ‘fetishise the national state’ (Örkény 2005: 29) and the ‘people’ (Jenne 2016). This ‘fetishisation’ has become quite prominent in recent years, especially after the landslide victory of the national conservative Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance) Party in the 2010 national elections in Hungary and the ascent to power of the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) – Law and Justice – Party in Poland in 2015. Public discourses in both countries have focused on what it means to be a true Hungarian (*igaz(i) magyar*) or a true Pole (*prawdziwy Polak*). In an interview published in *Polityka*, Konrad Dulkowski, coordinator of the Centre to Monitor Racist and Xenophobic Behaviour, summed it up as follows: ‘Now every action against the other/stranger is prised

as a responsibility of a true Pole' – *Teraz każde działanie przeciwko jakiemukolwiek obcemu jest pochwalane jako obowiązek prawdziwego Polaka* (Sojda 2017; see also Blaszkiewicz, no date). In Hungary, Fidesz politicians have openly attended and endorsed ethno-nationalist festivals like the 'saddle parade' (*nyeregszemle*) that place conserving Hungarian traditions at the centre of their message (Szabó 2014). In a strange fusion of pre-Christian shamanistic rituals and Christian doctrines, 'tradition guarding' (*hagyományőrzés*) often carries a very restrictive understanding of what it means to be a true Hungarian today (Gilicze 2014). The irony, of course, is that the Carpathian basin has witnessed an almost constant flow of mass migration from Anatolia to Asia, the Caucasus and so on – a historic fact that is often ignored by members of this sub-culture.

Most countries deploy an array of national symbols as a means of forming collective consciousness and cultivating national identity. However, in Poland and Hungary, these expressions go beyond 'banal nationalism' (Billig 1995) in the form of everyday rituals – the use of the national currency, the saluting of the flag, the singing of the national anthem and the observing of national holidays. The fetishisation of national symbols has taken a much more dangerous form. In Hungary, the red and white striped Árpád flag has become commonplace at Fidesz and Jobbik rallies. The Árpád flag is represented on the Hungarian coat of arms; however, the flag on its own is also symbolic of the Árpád family, the founding Royal Family of Christian Hungary. This flag first become controversial when a modified version of it, depicting an arrow-cross in the centre of an otherwise plainly striped red and white flag was used as the flag of the Arrow Cross Party in the 1940s. Fascistic versions of the flag use nine rather than eight stripes (starting and ending in red). The 'Map of Greater Hungary', showing the country's pre-1920 Treaty of Trianon borders, is also prominently displayed in many places. This map is a symbol of foreign oppressors taking Hungary's power away (Saltman 2014). Inexplicably, the flag of Szeklerland (*Székelyföld*), a region in the middle of Romania where 71 per cent of the population is composed of ethnic Hungarians (Institutul National De Statistică 2011), adorns the Hungarian Parliament, along with the Hungarian national flag, while the EU flag is conspicuously missing. Ironically, during the communist regime, possessing a keyring in the colour of the national Hungarian flag was cause for arrest since displaying the national flag was equated with nationalism (Cieśla 2016), which was frowned upon.

In Poland, flaunting national symbols was considered ill-mannered but not forbidden in the way it was in Hungary. This situation, however, has changed drastically in recent years. In 2009, several online stores such as *Ultrapatriot.pl* and *Polscypatrioci.pl* were established to sell shirts and gadgets to members of ultra-nationalistic parties and organisations such as *Stronnictwo Narodowe* (National Party), *Młodzież Wszechpolska* (All Polish Youth), *ONR* (National Radical Camp) or *NP* (Poland Forward). In 2014, following the 60th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, the 'Fighting Anchor', a symbol of hope for regaining independence widely used during World War II, appeared on cars and banners, often accompanied by slogans such as 'Poland for Poles', 'Great Poland' or 'Death to the Enemies of the Fatherland' (Cieśla 2016).

In both countries, the prevailing public debate defines national identity 'not only from within, namely from the features that fellow-nationals share in common but also from without, that is, through distinguishing and differentiating the nation from other nations or ethnic groups' (Triandafyllidou 1998: 593). Belonging to a nation implies not only knowing who 'we' are but also recognising who the 'others' are. In this conceptualisation, national identity becomes meaningful only through the contrast with others. Hungarians are Christian, not Jewish; Poles are Catholic, not Muslim. 'Muslim refugees are not welcome because they could never become one of us', argued some of our interviewees, especially those representing the more conservative organisations. So far, this debate is an abstract discussion, as there are very few Muslims in both countries. The phenomenon we are dealing with is Islamophobia, except without Muslims.

Islamophobia without Muslims

Unlike in the United Kingdom, France or Germany, there are very few immigrants in Hungary and Poland, and even fewer Muslims. According to the last census conducted in 2011, there were 5 500 Muslims, mostly Sunni, living in Hungary. The census did allow for dual identification, hence ‘the sum of residents declaring Hungarian and Arab ethnicity is higher than those declaring their affiliation to Islam’. Indeed, over 70 per cent declared themselves Hungarian, while 42.5 per cent considered themselves to be Arab by ethnicity (Bayrakli and Hafez 2015: 278). Budapest, a city of more than 2 million, has only one mosque and a handful of prayer rooms. The last minaret was built 500 years ago by the occupying Ottoman Turks (Pall and Sayfo 2016). While large numbers of Muslim refugees transitioned through Hungary in 2015, very few received permission to stay, therefore the number of Muslims in Hungary continues to be negligible. Yet 72 per cent of Hungarians, the highest proportion of any European country, see Islam and Muslims in a very negative light (Wike, Stokes and Simmons 2016).

The presence of Muslims in Poland dates back to the 14th century when Tartars settled in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Rynkowski 2015). In north-eastern Poland, there are villages – Kruszyniany and Bohoniki – where Muslim Tartars have lived peacefully alongside their Catholic and Eastern Orthodox brethren for a long time. According to the 2011 Census, there are approximately 2 000 Tatars living in Poland today. Other sources, however, put the number between 1 500 and in excess of 5 000 (Dziąćko n.d.).

In addition to Tartars, there are also other Muslims of more recent immigrant stock living in Poland. At a conference at the Józef Tischner European University in Cracow, held in July 2011 to debate the situation of Muslims in Poland and the effects of the Arab Spring on Polish Muslims, panelists presented papers about Poles of Syrian, Egyptian and Turkish origin who are well integrated and play an important role in civic and community organisations in different parts of the country. Their families came to Poland in the 1970s as part of the Soviet bloc scheme to attract non-European young people to communist ideas. After 1989, small numbers of Chechen, Afghan and Iraqi refugees settled in Poland (Grodź 2010). Konrad Pędzwiatr (2015) estimates the number of Muslims in Poland to be between 25 000 and 40 000 people, while Grodź (2010) places the number within the range 15 000 to 30 000.

Despite the fact that the Muslim minority in Poland is about 0.1 per cent of the total population (Narkowicz and Pędzwiatr 2017b), public opinion surveys conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) show that only 23 per cent of Poles hold favourable views of Islam and Muslims; 44 per cent declare very unfavourable attitudes towards Muslims and an additional 33 per cent do not have an opinion (CBOS 2015a). CBOS emphasised that the opinions which Poles hold about Muslims are mainly based on information found in the popular media. The researchers stressed that only 12 per cent of Poles personally know a Muslim. Poles who indicate that they have personal relationships with Muslims are highly educated, have the highest *per capita* income of the surveyed population, do not go to church, and identify as liberals.

Interestingly, prior to 2015 there was virtually no discussion of Muslim immigration to Poland, for the very simple reason that almost no migrants from Muslim countries were going there and acceptance of foreigners was growing steadily (Porter-Szűcs 2016). Just seven years ago, at the 2011 conference in Cracow mentioned above, the consensus was that Muslims are contributing members of society and should feel welcome in Poland. At around the same time, in 2012, CBOS conducted a survey of attitudes towards different religions. The attitudes towards Muslims and Islam then were much more favourable than in 2017. Of those surveyed, 48 per cent indicated that they would welcome Muslims in their workplace, while 45 per cent declared that they would not be opposed to having a Muslim neighbour and 41 per cent would accept a Muslim person as their boss. However, only 21 per cent would welcome a Muslim son- or daughter-in-law (CBOS 2012).

Historically, the encounters with Muslims in Hungary and Poland took different forms. Some were violent, while others were characterised as peaceful coexistence. The Ottoman occupation of Hungary (1541–1699) is still present in the public sphere. However, according to some writers, the Ottoman era is not remembered as a Christian–Muslim conflict but, rather, as a foreign occupation in the same way that the Catholic Austrians, who conquered Hungary after the Turks left, or the atheist Soviets, who controlled the country until 1989, were regarded (Pall and Sayfo 2016).

On the other hand, the Polish King, Jan III Sobieski, is remembered in Polish historiography as the defender of Christian Europe against Muslim Ottomans. The 1683 Battle of Vienna, where Sobieski defeated the Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa and his 200 000-strong army of Turkish warriors – the latter had apparently spent decades perfecting the art of reducing enemy cities to rubble and plundering them with impunity – is often invoked by members of the All Polish Youth (*Młodzież Wszechpolska*) who want to defend Poland against Muslims refugees.

These events from the past are considered to be watershed moments and have become part of the narratives of national crises. ‘Defeat is a thing of the past and cannot be repeated’, assert many Poles and Hungarians. The Hungarian national anthem, written almost a century before the Treaty of Trianon, draws on memories of defeat suffered at the hands of foreign powers – such as the 16th century Ottoman occupation of the country lasting nearly 150 years – and portrays Hungarians as a tormented people who have already suffered a fair share of injustices; they must defend themselves and Europe from a similar fate.

Interestingly, in the second part of the 20th century, Hungary and Poland built strong political and economic relationships with several Middle Eastern countries. Many students from Arab countries – Algeria, Syria and Iraq – studied at universities in Budapest, Debrecen and Pécs, pursuing engineering and medical degrees. Some of them married Hungarians and settled in the country (Pall and Sayfo 2016). By the mid-2010s, Jobbik, the far-right political party, forged strong ties with Muslim countries, inviting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to send observers to monitor the 2009 European parliamentary elections (Political Radical 2014). The party’s sympathy with Islam isolated Jobbik from the mainstream European far-right. Today, the Hungarian government continues its efforts to strengthen economic ties with Muslim countries in the Middle East and Asia – Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Saudi Arabia (Éltető and Völgyi 2013) – and highlights the importance of a dialogue between different cultures (*Daily News Hungary* 2016) in the international arena. The Orbán government has been promoting a policy of ‘Eastern-opening’ in order to secure new export markets for Hungarian products.

In the 1980s many Polish nurses and medical doctors worked in Arab countries. PolService, the Polish Trade Enterprise, used to arrange two-year contracts for healthcare professionals to work in Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. In 1986 alone, 950 Polish medical specialists (nurses, doctors and technicians) worked on individual contracts in the Middle East (Miśkiewicz 1988). Thousands more worked under collective contracts, where medical teams were recruited to staff entire hospitals. Additionally, over 1 400 Polish medical professionals were employed in Libya in 1986 (Goździak 2016). In the late 1980s, nearly 2 800 Polish engineers and technicians worked in Iraq building roads in the south of the country (Pohl 2003).

At home, however, as evidenced by the refusal to admit Middle Eastern refugees, the Polish government remained unequivocally hostile towards Muslim migrants. ‘The Polish government will not change its mind about the refugees. It’s a final decision’, Elżbieta Witek, chief of the Prime Minister’s cabinet office, told TVP, the state broadcaster. ‘I’m a Christian and a Catholic and I try to be a good person, and the Polish government acts in the same way... A good Christian is someone who helps, not necessarily by accepting refugees’ (Cienski 2017). In turn, post-Socialist Hungarian governments failed to take a pro-active role in helping or

integrating refugees fleeing from the atrocities of the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s, or even migrants looking to move to Hungary from Transylvania (Tóth 2003).

Yet Islamophobia was not dominant in the 1990s and early 2000s in Hungary. Two relatively small groups were its main proponents, namely a group of Jewish liberals who could not dissociate their sympathy for Israel from their hostility towards Muslim countries,² and the members of the Faith Church – American-style Born Again Pentecostals – who saw Islam as a manifestation of the Antichrist (Pall and Sayfo 2016). These anti-Muslim sentiments were significantly less prevalent than today's anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes.

Pall and Sayfo (2016) explain the current Islamophobia, stressing the socio-political developments that have occurred in Hungary since 2013, when half a million Hungarians migrated to Great Britain and Germany in search of better livelihoods. In order to legitimise their presence in Western Europe – where they were not necessarily received with open arms – the Hungarian migrants adopted a strong anti-Muslim stance. Immediately after Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004, Poles began migrating – in large numbers – to Western Europe. The number of Polish migrants staying abroad for longer than two months tripled between early 2004 and early 2007 from approximately 250 000 to 522 000 (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008). By the end of 2015, according to the Polish Main Statistical Office, 2 397 000 Poles resided outside Poland, an increase of 3.3 per cent in comparison with 2014 (GUS 2016). Like Hungarians, Polish migrants have adopted strong anti-Muslim attitudes. For example, analysis of articles and comments posted on *londynek.net* indicate a deeply entrenched hatred of Muslims. The language used to describe Muslim immigrants in the UK, Germany or Sweden is vulgar and racist; South Asians are often called '*ciapaci*' (referring to the flatbread preferred by many Asians) or '*koziojebcy*' (accusing Muslims of engaging in sexual intercourse with goats). Stories about 'no-go-zones' in France or Sweden where Sharia laws prevail and disdain for local legal norms is, reportedly, paramount, abound.

In both Hungary and Poland, the Christian identity has been exploited for political gain. The Fidesz Party won two back-to-back elections in 2010 and 2014. Moreover, while Hungary remains one of the least religious countries in Europe – less than 10 per cent of Hungarians attend church regularly – Fidesz continues to strengthen its Christian-nationalist profile, funding activities of the youth organisation of its minor coalition partner, the Christian Democratic Party (KDNP), in an effort to attract an unlikely demographic, namely young professionals who regard Christianity as a core part of their identity.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to gauge the level of societal support for Christian politics. The KDNP has managed to jump the parliamentary electoral threshold of 5 per cent only twice since the democratic transition – in 1989, they reached 6.4 per cent and, in 1994, 7.05 per cent. KDNP candidates have not distinguished themselves independently from Fidesz in any election since 2002 and dual membership in KDNP and Fidesz is actively encouraged by KDNP (*mandiner.hu* 2012).

In a parallel development, the popularity of the extreme right dramatically increased during the final years of the first decade of the 21st century; Jobbik entered parliament in 2010 with 12 per cent of the votes amongst both low-educated rural and highly-educated urban voters. Extreme-right ideology has been especially successful amongst young people (aged 15+) while Hungarian society has not become more traditional or religious overall (Molnár, Attila and Péter 2011). Nonetheless, a radicalisation of public discourse did take place in Hungary and Poland following the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks. In Hungary, this radicalisation has been fuelled by government-orchestrated propaganda campaigns. It is important to note, that increased migration came at a time when the popularity of Fidesz was waning. Traditionally, migration was a most popular topic among the extreme right but Fidesz successfully adopted it, taking it away from Jobbik. The opposition parties – non-Jobbik, mostly leftist – did not see political opportunity in the migration 'crisis', as it would have been very difficult to present a positive narrative of migration (Kiss 2016). Things changed in 2015.

The 2015 refugee 'crisis': a threat to the Christian identity of Europe

By the end of 2015, according to the Hungarian authorities, 391 384 mainly Muslim refugees and asylum-seekers crossed the Serbian-Hungarian border and descended on the Keleti Railway Station in Budapest, shocking many Hungarians. Instead of seeing refugees fleeing war-torn countries, many Hungarians saw them as a very real threat to their way of life. Only a fraction of the arrivals received permanent residency status (KSH.hu n.d.). Yet, for Viktor Orbán, the arrival of refugees was not a humanitarian challenge but a Muslim invasion that required an appropriate response: closing the Balkan land route to the European Union. A 100-mile-long, four-meter-high, razor-wire-topped fence on Hungary's southern borders with Serbia and Croatia was erected to keep refugees out. Hungarian border police, guns in holsters, swagger in pairs alongside the fence in a scene reminiscent of the Cold War. Yet, somehow, this is not 'enough'. Hungary is recruiting 3 000 'border-hunters' to join the 10 000 police and soldiers already patrolling the border (Goździak 2017), parts of which have recently been electrified. These actions link Christianity with the nation (*keresztény-nemzeti eszme*) (Fekete 2016: 40) and stand in sharp contrast with the events of 1989, when Hungary opened its border with Austria and let thousands of East Germans through to West Germany (Haraszti 2015).

While it is true that the unprecedented influx of refugees and asylum-seekers in 2015 did result in at least a handful of jihadi terrorists entering the Schengen Zone through Hungary,³ the government has systematically used the arrival of refugees as an opportunity to strengthen their Christian discourse and simultaneously stigmatise refugees as terrorists. The conservative media likened the migration to the Ottoman era 'when Hungary was a "bastion", defending Christianity from "Muslim hordes"' (Pall and Sayfo 2016: 6). Antal Rogán, at the time leader of the Hungarian Fidesz' parliamentary group, warned of a future 'United European Caliphate' (Villányi 2015), while former Secretary of State László L. Simon urged Hungarians to make more babies in order to counter the negative cultural effects of mass migration such as the envisioned 'impending victory of Islamic parties imposing polygamy and destroying the remainder of European culture' (Simon 2015: 231). Beyond political statements, armed military police patrols on the streets of Budapest, in metro stations and in public spaces, have become a regular sight, as is the case in Paris and Brussels, while Hungary has yet to experience a terrorist attack.

While very few Muslim refugees coming from the Middle East reached the Polish borders in 2015, the migration that was occurring elsewhere in Europe has been greatly politicised, especially by the populist national-conservative Law and Justice Party, KORWiN, and far-right groups that formed part of Kukiz'15. Political candidates expressed openly xenophobic, racist and Islamophobic views, produced anti-immigration posters and participated in demonstrations 'against the Islamisation of Poland and Europe' (Pędziwiatr 2015). Kamil Kupiec, representing the KORWiN party in Cracow, used an electoral poster that read 'Instead of immigrants we want repatriates'. Ewa Damaszek, also from KORWiN, proclaimed 'Silesia is our home. Islam has its own'. Ms Damaszek is referring here to people of Polish origin whose ancestors have relocated to Kazakhstan, Siberia, Azerbaijan or other countries.

In mid-2015, the Council of the European Union adopted a decision to reallocate some 120 000 migrants from Greece and Italy, asking Hungary to find homes for 1 294 people. Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Romania voted against the scheme. The Hungarian and Slovakian governments argued the illegality of the plan in front of the European Court of Justice (ECJ). In the Autumn of 2016, Viktor Orbán, the Prime Minister of Hungary, called for a referendum and asked Hungarians a simple question: 'Do you want the European Union to prescribe the mandatory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the consent of the National Assembly?' Voter turnout was 39 per cent. This fell far short of the 50 per cent participation required to make the referendum valid under Hungarian law. Never one to let facts get in the way of politics, Orbán,

whose Eurosceptic Fidesz party has more support than all opposition parties combined, said in a televised speech:

The European Union's proposal is to let the migrants in and distribute them in mandatory fashion among the member states and for Brussels to decide about this distribution. Hungarians today considered this proposal and they rejected it. Hungarians decided that only we Hungarians can decide with whom we want to live. The question was 'Brussels or Budapest' and we decided this issue is exclusively the competence of Budapest (Goździak, 2017 blog post).

Orbán decided that the 3.3 million Hungarians who voted 'No' in the referendum speak for the whole country of 10 million Hungarians. After his speech, there were fireworks over the Danube River in the colours of the Hungarian flag.

Several Facebook pages echoed the messages of the government campaign. As indicated above, we monitored the most prominent pro-government Facebook page in Hungary. The 'ELÉG' (Enough) Facebook page boasted 128 000 likes and a mission statement to fight left-liberal lies and propaganda, including attitudes towards refugees.⁴ The page has been identified in Hungarian media as the most prominent page in a Fidesz run network of propaganda pages (Haszán 2018a, b) or as part of Fidesz's 'Facebook Army', which aims to shield pro-Fidesz users from reality (Herczeg 2018). The page, along with other Fidesz influenced media outlets such as the Public Service Television Broadcaster (MTV) or the privately owned TV2, are all part of a larger government controlled propaganda network. Along with a number of national and local newspapers, these outlets often coordinate their stories which at times are based on explicit directions from Fidesz party apparatchiks (Ráti 2018). The 'ELÉG' page regularly echoes government orchestrated communication campaigns (Ács 2018). In light of these connections between 'ELÉG' and the government messaging, we can safely assume that the posts of the page were representative of the messaging that Fidesz wanted to convey to its camp in order to mobilise them ahead of the referendum. The posts' rhetoric, called on voters to defend Christian values and Hungarian national identity in order to stop Hungary from becoming a breeding ground for terrorism. The following comments were illustrative of the type of discourse that unfolded on the Facebook page in relation to these posts:

Shoot 99 of them with bullets drenched in pig's blood. Let the 100th go, and tell the others what happened. That will teach them.

I will vote no, because I want to live in Hungary as a Hungarian. I don't want Muslims as my neighbours. I live in the south. We've already experienced the destruction that these people cause.

Since they reproduce like rats, they occupy the life space of non-Muslims, they pop-up all over the planet, they take what they want. A normal person wouldn't want that.

Who wants their grandchildren to suddenly come home with a migrant fiancée or bride... what will happen with the Hungarians?

I have three grandchildren, three girls, thank God! Anyone who doesn't vote should fucking die. Whoever votes yes, should die in agony!

The Hungarian referendum will have precedent-setting value as well. If a wave of referenda starts in Europe (and it will) European people can start resisting multiculturalism on a wider scale we can save Europe from being discoloured, from destruction, from the incomparable rampaging of the left-wing!

[responding to someone] were you this stupid when your mother gave birth to you or did you learn it from your father? Have you already offered your mother and your daughters to the migrants? Are they already at the border giving sexual relief to at least be able to justify their existence?

The fear that Muslim women will bear lots of children and the local population will be outnumbered, somehow diluted or ‘discoloured’ by Muslims and multiculturalism is palpable in these posts. In Poland, similar sentiments often go hand-in-hand with posts suggesting that Muslim men will rape Polish women, and therefore must not be allowed to come to Poland. Opponents of admitting Muslim refugees also assert that the Polish government and Polish men have a duty to protect their women.

Rather than accepting the EU decision, the Hungarian government spent approximately €28 million euros on a xenophobic anti-immigrant campaign (Dull 2016). As indicated above, by the end of 2015 a total of 391 384 refugees and asylum seekers entered Hungary through its southern border. This means that the government spent around €70 per refugee in a country where the monthly welfare check for the unemployed is around €70 (Kormany.hu 2015). Undoubtedly this amount could have been used more effectively either to provide transitional financial assistance to refugees or use the money to facilitate integration of asylum seekers who wanted to settle in Hungary. Attracting migrants to stay would have made particular sense in light of Fidesz’s strategic goal to stop the long-declining Hungarian birth rate and the aging of the Hungarian society (Előd 2018).

Instead, in order to further prevent the European Union from sending refugees to Hungary, Mr. Orbán proposed a constitutional amendment to reflect ‘the will of the people’ (Mno.hu 2016). It was presented to the Parliament on October 10, 2016, but the bill was rejected by a narrow margin. The far-right Jobbik party, which contends that some of the new arrivals pose a security threat, sealed the bill’s rejection by boycotting the vote. However, it held out a lifeline to Orbán by indicating that it would support the ban if Orbán scrapped a separate investor visa scheme under which foreigners could effectively buy the right to live in Hungary (and move freely within Schengen) in exchange for buying government bonds with a 5-year maturity for at least €300 000. Some 10 000 Chinese have taken advantage of the scheme to move to Hungary, as did smaller numbers of affluent investors from Russia and the Middle East (Fábián and Német 2016).

Somewhat contradictory to this anti-refugee sentiment, was the outpouring of assistance offered by civil society organisations and civilians to refugees who descended on the Keleti Railway Station in the Summer of 2015 (Koncz and Polyák 2015). As Migration Aid volunteers recount, volunteers brought toys and sweets for the refugee children and turned the station into a playground during the afternoons. However, when Migration Aid volunteers started to use chalk to draw colourful pictures on the asphalt, as a creative means to help refugee children deal with their trauma, the Hungarian police reminded the volunteers that the children could be made liable for the ‘violation of public order’. In contrast to the civil society’s engagement with children, the Hungarian government tried to undermine and limit the population’s sympathy towards refugees. Employees of the Hungarian state television were told ‘not to broadcast images of refugee children’ (Anarki 2015). Ultimately, the task of visually capturing the everyday life of refugee families and their children, as the only means to bridge the distance between the refugees and the receiving societies, was left to volunteers and Facebook activists, such as the photo blogger Budapest Seen. Budapest Seen captured activities at the train station, at the Slovenian and Serbian border, and elsewhere in the country, where both NGO workers and regular citizens were providing much needed water, food, sanitary napkins for women, diapers for babies, and medical assistance.

Poland, a much larger country than Hungary, was asked by the EU to accept 6 500 refugees. The proposed quota constitutes less than 0.02 per cent of the Polish population of 40 million, but has sparked a lot of outrage. The anti-refugee rally in November 2015 in the city of Wrocław captured the populism that has been on display in Poland in the last couple of years. Thousands of protesters marched, denouncing the EU proposal. The rally members chanted anti-Islam and anti-migrant slogans declaring their loyalty to ‘God, Honour, and Fatherland’. They finished the gathering by burning an effigy – not of a Muslim or a refugee, but a Hassidic Jew – wrapped in the EU flag (Tharoor 2016).

In a YouTube chat, Jarosław Kaczyński, the president of the Law and Justice party, said: ‘After recent events connected with acts of terror, [Poland] will not accept refugees because there is no mechanism that would ensure security’ (Kaczyński 2016). Kaczyński also rejected the EU suggestion that countries which do not want to accept refugees should pay €250 000 for each asylum-seeker they turn away. According to Eurostat (2015), Poland accepted just 0.21 asylum-seekers per 1 000 citizens, compared to 0.5 per thousand in the United Kingdom or 8.43 in Sweden.

Many Poles agree with the party leadership. More than half of the Poles surveyed by CBOS in 2017 were adamant that Poland should not admit any refugees; 40 per cent of the respondents agreed the country should provide temporary refuge until it is safe for the refugees to go back home. Only four per cent of the survey participants favoured permanent resettlement of refugees in Poland. A higher proportion of respondents – almost two-thirds – were against relocating to Poland Middle Eastern and Northern African refugees already in the European Union. Only 28 per cent of the survey respondents think that Poland should share the responsibility with other EU countries and accept some of the refugees (CBOS 2017). Debates observed in the public sphere – on Polish TV, in churches, and cafes – centred on rejecting Muslim refugees and allowing Christians from the Middle East to settle in Poland. The Warsaw-based Estera Foundation, proclaimed that they would support resettlement of Christians from Syria. Miriam Shaded, the head of Estera, said that Muslim refugees pose a threat to Poland:

They [non-Christian refugees] can be a threat to Poland. I think it is a great way for ISIS to locate their troops... all around Europe (Wasik and Foy 2015).

A study financed by the Visegrád Fund and conducted between July 2016 and June 2017, examined opinions of young people (17 to 30-year old) about the recent ‘migration crisis’. In Poland, young people were almost equally divided between those who would accept refugees from countries affected by armed conflict (43 per cent) and those who would not (46 per cent). When asked if they were ready to welcome refugees into their neighbourhoods, 43 per cent indicated they were not ready, while 41 per cent said they would receive refugees; 16 per cent said they did not know what they would do (Visegrád Fund 2017). Unfortunately, the study did not provide information on educational levels of the youth who participated in the survey. It would be interesting to know whether education affected people’s opinions.

While the vast majority (75 per cent) of the Polish youth did not notice more refugees in their local area, 66.7 per cent affirmed that there are no positive effects stemming from arrival of refugees. The researchers involved in the study attributed these statements to the power of media discourses that portray refugees in very negative light. In our own research, we have also seen negative effects of media, especially social media, on attitudes towards refugees. According to the Visegrád study, young Poles are mainly afraid of cultural and religious tensions (82.5 per cent), followed by increase in crime (65.1 per cent) and terrorist attacks (58.7 per cent).

Poles see also Muslim men as a threat to the safety of Polish women. In the winter of 2016, shortly after the alleged mass sexual assaults of women in Cologne on the 2015 New Year’s Eve, a popular right-wing

Polish weekly, *wSieci* (The Network) published a deeply provocative magazine cover. It showed a young blonde woman, garbed loosely in the EU flag, being groped by three men. The cover line read: 'The Islamic rape of Europe'. The magazine echoed the sentiments of Polish right-wing groups, both secular and Catholic, who portrayed Muslim men as polygamous and abusive, and an imminent threat to the safety of Polish (and more generally, white European) women. While the magazine cover might be connected with the sexual assaults in Germany, the magazine's rendition of a young white woman, violated by dark-skinned men, is also eerily reminiscent of the nationalist propaganda of the WWII era with its imagery of a scheming Jewish spider eyeing a blonde *Fräulein* or a French colonial soldier groping a fair-skinned girl (Taroon 2016).

The call to protect Polish women from 'wild Muslim men' is happening at the same time when women's rights in Poland are being severely curtailed. In October 2017, police in several Polish cities raided offices of the Women's Rights Centre and *Baba*, two nongovernmental organisations that support domestic violence victims and promote women's rights (Bielecka 2017). While some called the reports fake news (Młynarz 2017), Polish parliamentarians periodically do call for Poland's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention (EU News 2016), a treaty aimed at preventing violence against women, supporting survivors, and holding perpetrators to account. The Polish Catholic Church claims the convention is a source of evil 'gender ideology' aimed at destroying Polish traditional values (Komosa 2014).

The prospect of mosques being built by refugees is also threatening to Poles. In the spring of 2010, when news of the first mosque to be built in Warsaw was announced, posters portraying a female figure in a niqab standing in front of missile-shaped minarets appeared in the city centre. The posters that read 'Stop the Radical Mosque in Warsaw' were part of a campaign spearheaded by *Europa Przyszłości* (Europe of the Future). 'Focusing on the niqab-clad body at the forefront of the poster, (...) the group emphasised the central position of Muslim women in the perceived "clash of civilisations" that have now supposedly reached Poland. This sentiment was shared by Catholic right-wing groups who also warned against 'Islamisation' of the continent by focusing considerable attention on women in Islam' (Narkowicz and Pędziwiatr 2017a: 289). While Muslim men are portrayed in public debates as polygamous and abusive, Muslim women are described as caged in the hijab, secluded, and forced into marriage.

These opinions are not limited to Poland and Hungary. In Central Europe, Muslims and Islam mobilise gender narratives through two lenses (Narkowicz 2014): that of rescue narratives (Bracke 2012) and that of threat narratives (Puar and Rai 2002). Additionally, in Poland, Islamophobia – seen through a gendered framework – deployed two apparently contradictory narratives: that of secular liberal values and that of Catholic national values (Narkowicz and Pędziwiatr 2017a).

Many Poles and Hungarians characterise Islam as misogynistic and gender oppressive. They are not alone. Many feminist scholars also represent Islam as inherently gender oppressive. In fact, as Riffat Hassan argues, 'propaganda against Islam and Muslims is nothing new in the West. (...) Europeans always constructed Islam as a civilisational adversary and the religion, an antithesis of European values' (Hasan 2012: 61). In the wake of the 9/11 attacks on New York in 2001 and the subsequent U.S. bombing of Afghanistan in October of the same year, the oppression of Afghan women was used to justify the attempt to overthrow the Taliban (Rawi 2004).

In Poland, the secular proponents of rescue narratives argue that the oppression of women in Islam conflicts with Western liberal values of gender equity. They seem to be united in an imagined community where gender equality is a norm and further differentiate themselves from the Muslim Other. However, the situation of women in Polish society is far from this idealised vision of equality. Despite women's elevated image in Polish culture as 'reproducers of the nation', women are disadvantaged politically, socially, and economically. In 2010, Agnieszka Nowak (2010) described the status of women in Poland as 'permanent crisis'. Analysts observed that after 1989, gender policy was seen as a remnant of communism and state-socialist policies. As

a result, the 1989 transformation reinforced the traditional vision of women as mothers and wives, their marginalisation in the public sphere as well as the rise of anti-feminist discourses and problems with achieving women's emancipation (Szelewa 2011; Warat 2014). Recent protests – Black Monday in 2016 and Black Tuesday in 2017 – brought thousands of women (and some male allies) to the streets to protest restrictions on women's rights, including access to abortion and other reproductive health solutions.

By and large, Polish youths living in Poland are not afraid of economic consequences of migration. Only 6.3 per cent are concerned about salary reductions and 12.6 per cent worry about losing jobs to refugees. Nonetheless, content analysis of social media platforms used by Poles living and working abroad – especially in the United Kingdom and Norway – suggests that the economic competition with refugees and migrants is quite pronounced in the minds of Polish migrants, young and old. They feel threatened by refugees and migrants from outside Europe both at home and abroad.

The debate about migration is quite engendered. Both Poles and Hungarians have been opposed to accepting male refugees. Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, the leader of the Polish People's Party, said: 'We'll never close the door to orphans, but let the young men fight for the freedom of their countries'. Indeed, much of the social media discourse focused on TV portrayals of young refugee men, talking on cell phones and wearing modern Western clothing. This was not the image Poles and Hungarians equated with being a refugee. The opinions expressed by many of our interviewees portrayed the young men as 'cowards' who did not want to fight for their country. If Poland and Hungary were to open their doors to refugees, they should admit only women and children, wrote many discussants on social media. Newspaper articles echoed these sentiments (Niezalezna.pl 2017; Pawlicki 2017).

The main fear Poles and Hungarians express is the fear of Islam. Seventy-three per cent of Poles in the Visegrád study expressed fear of Muslim refugees. Only 16 per cent would host Muslim refugees in their homes – 56 per cent find that idea unacceptable. In another study, 44 per cent of the surveyed Poles indicated that they dislike Muslims compared to 23 per cent who like them. Around 20 per cent of Poles did not wish to have a Muslim colleague or a neighbour, much less a family member. Half of the surveyed Poles rejected the idea of marrying a Muslim or welcoming a Muslim son or daughter-in-law to their family. According to a study on prejudices, Poles perceive Muslims and Arabs as incompetent and emotionally cold. Additionally, Poles associate Islam with terrorism (Stefaniak 2015). Eurobarometer research indicates that Poles and Hungarians fear terrorism more often than citizens of old member states (European Commission 2015). The Migration Research Institute published reports on security risks posed by Muslims in Europe, providing 'scientific' justification for the Hungarian government's anti-immigrant policies (MIT 2015).

There were also more balanced opinions, especially those expressed by Zoltan Szombathy, a professor of Islamic history at ELTE (Somogyi 2015), Zsolt Rostoványi, at the time Rector of Corvinus University (Rostoványi 2015), and Erzsébet N. Rózsa of the Hungarian Institute of Foreign Affairs (Hirado.hu 2016). They highlighted that the vast majority of Muslims denounce radicalism and that the integration challenges faced by some Muslim immigrants stem from socio-cultural and not religious issues. The general public did not pay much attention to these arguments. The question for the Catholic Poland and Christian Hungary remains: what happened to the biblical precept of welcoming the stranger? Both countries use Christianity to defend their stance, but it seems that they read the Bible very selectively. Interestingly, the call to 'welcome the stranger', through protection and hospitality, and to honour the stranger or those of other faiths with respect and equality, is deeply rooted in all major religions (UNHCR 2013) and adhered to by many refugee resettlement agencies, not just Christian ones (see <https://www.hias.org/>).

What happened to welcoming the stranger, no matter what her religion?

Blatantly disregarding the call issued by Pope Francis to welcome the strangers, many Hungarian and Polish clergy launched anti-Muslim refugees campaigns. Gyula Marfi, the Archbishop of Veszprem, called the refugees ‘invaders’ and ‘Islamists’ (Németh 2015) and asserted that the main reason for the migration of Muslim refugees is *jihad* (Barcsa and Máté-Tóth 2016). Bishop Laszlo Kiss-Riggo joined the choir and declared that the Pope was wrong to call for compassion and ignorant of the Muslim threat to Hungary’s Christian character (Witte 2015). Bela Balas, Bishop of Koposvar, published an apocalyptic letter in the *Heti Válasz* magazine entitled ‘*Evening news from the European caliphate in the first century after Christianity*’, where he evoked destruction of churches, persecution of Christian believers and priests, banning of pork and wine, censorship, and emigration of European citizens (Balás 2015). These attitudes resonate with the legacy of Ottokár Prohászka, Bishop of Székesfehérvár between 1905 and 1927 and prominent Anti-Semite ideologue, calling for the extermination of Jews whom he characterised as a festering disease on the body of Christian Hungary. Prohászka still has several standing statues and high schools named after him today.

Not all Hungarian clergy had negative attitudes towards the Pope’s call to action. Péter Mustó, a Jesuit priest, and Csaba Böjte, a Franciscan monk, responded positively to Pope Francis’ message of humanitarian responsibility towards refugees. István Bogárdi Szabó, the Bishop of the Hungarian Reformed Church’s Synod, called for the expansion of the Refugee Mission. Miklós Beer, the Catholic Bishop of Vác, thought that Hungarians ought to be a lot more worried about Charlie Hebdo’s liberal atheists’ spirituality than about Muslims who pray three times a day and want to live by the Koran. Péter Ganec, a Lutheran Bishop, visited one of the refugee camps and called for compassion and assistance to refugees. Others, however, thought it was not their responsibility. The Hungarian Baptists believed that it was more important to invest in helping refugees in their countries of origin than providing assistance in Hungary. Leaders of several Hungarian Jewish communities publically empathised with the persecution faced by Muslim refugees, but called on governments of rich Arab countries to step up and help. They also emphasised the need for strict control of immigration but maintained that the decision should be in the hands of the Hungarian government (Barcsa and Máté-Tóth 2016).

In Poland, a country where Catholics comprise between 87 to 94 per cent of the population, the Pope’s request to welcome refugees was met with scepticism and diplomatic reluctance. In an official response, the Polish Episcopate failed to indicate whether the Pontiff’s call to action would be implemented or not. Instead, the Episcopate pushed the responsibility to help asylum seekers onto the Polish government. ‘When it comes to a specific assistance to refugees in Poland, there is no doubt that the major initiative rests on the shoulders of secular power’, stated the bishops’ communique, issued in September 2015.

Some clergy were more direct in their opposition to refugee admissions. Archbishop Hoser, for example, stressed that Muslim refugees would face insurmountable challenges in understanding and accepting Christian values and therefore would not be able to integrate into Polish society. Archbishop Hoser clearly represents a conservative stance and thinks that isolating both religions is a preferred alternative to finding creative solution to ensure peaceful co-existence of Islam and Catholicism. Deacon Jacek Jan Pawłowicz goes further. On his Facebook page, he regularly posts hostile, often vulgar, sentiments insulting Islam and Arab refugees. He claims that Syrians would turn aggressive as soon as they are granted refugee status. ‘These wild people – euphemistically called refugees – cannot respect anything, neither our rights nor culture’, he wrote. Pawłowicz also called for women who support refugee admission to ‘open their eyes’. ‘Maybe when such a ‘refugee’ rapes them, then they will understand why they were so fiercely agitating for and for whom they opened the door to our Polish house’, he wrote. While some Polish media outlets criticised Deacon Pawłowicz, the Episcopate has not initiated any investigation into his hate speech. Possibly the biggest offender is Jacek

Międlar. This young priest, currently suspended by the Catholic Church, speaks at far-right rallies and incites Polish youth to face the enemies of the homeland and the enemies of the Church. During one of his speeches he said: ‘You have to be a complete idiot if you don’t see the danger that comes with the waves of migrants/occupants’. Recently, Międlar gained international notoriety when he was stopped by border officials after landing at Stansted airport, intending to speak at a meeting of the far-right ‘Britain First’ organisation. In a tweet, Międlar complained that he was a victim; all he wanted to do was to protect children from ‘Muslim grooming gangs’ (Tempest 2017).

Father Międlar’s stance is not shared by all Polish clergy. The metropolitan of Wrocław, Archbishop Józef Kupny, has tweeted his support of Muslim refugees: ‘We must not shut the doors to our brothers and sisters only because they believe differently than we do’. Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek, from the more liberal wing of the Church, told the *Rzeczpospolita* newspaper that accepting a few hundred asylum seekers isn’t much of a problem for a country of 38 million. ‘Not accepting refugees practically means resigning from being a Christian’, he said. ‘I’m ashamed of those who don’t want to do their duty not just as Christians but as human beings’.

As we were writing this paper, the Polish Catholic Church organised a controversial prayer day on the borders surrounding the country. Parishioners from some 300 churches were bussed to border areas to pray the rosary on the feast day that marks the anniversary of the 1571 sea battle of Lepanto, a Christian victory over Ottoman Turks. Organisers said the prayer was not directed against anyone or anything; however, some commentators viewed the event as support for the Polish government’s refusal to accept Muslim migrants. Just a few days before the prayer event, Archbishop Wojciech Polak, standing at an outdoor pulpit at Jasna Góra shrine in the city of Częstochowa, Poland’s holiest Roman Catholic site, delivered a very different message to the president and prime minister seated before him: ‘We must be open and compassionate and ready to help those most needy, weak and persecuted, migrants and refugees’ (Scislowka 2017). Sceptics wonder if this is too little, too late.

From words to action

In Poland, Islamophobia has been expressed for a number of years, mainly on the Internet. This is not surprising, given the relatively small number of Muslims living in the country. CBOS research on Internet content shows that over 80 per cent of comments about Middle Eastern and North African refugees were negative, while positive opinions constituted a mere six per cent (CBOS 2015a). Recently, however, the hatred of Muslims is increasingly demonstrated in actions aimed at Muslims or people mistakenly believed to be Muslim (Górak-Sosnowska 2016). Indeed, *Ośrodek Monitorowania Zachowań Rasistowskich i Ksenofobicznych* (Centre for Monitoring Racist and Xenophobic Behaviour) as well as the press have been documenting increased anti-Muslim attacks. The same toxic environment is also present in Hungary; it results from years of government propaganda. There have been several incidents of police being called to investigate ‘suspicious’ groups of people or individuals believed to be illegal migrants in a handful of cities around the country. These instances involved locals calling police to report a group of ‘Negros and brown coloured men’ wandering in the city of Cegléd, speaking a foreign tongue; they turned out to be tourists (Rényi 2018), a pair of Sri Lankan students working as volunteers at a home for disabled children in the outskirts of Budapest (Tóth 2017), and a woman walking home from the hairdresser with a scarf wrapped around her head on the street in the town of Csongrád (K.T. 2018).

Much of these actions are aimed at demonising and dehumanising Muslims. One initiative called for sending bacon to a local mosque in hopes of defiling the place of worship and causing Muslims to abandon it (Woźnicki 2014). Another involved sharing an Internet meme calling for Muslims to be sent to concentration camps (Szymanik 2015). Very few Poles – only 12 per cent – have ever met a Muslim (Stefaniak 2015), but

when they do, these encounters sometimes become violent as evidenced by the examples of ‘foreign-looking’ individuals being beaten by locals. In mid-September 2017, a young Chechen woman bringing her son to a day care in Warsaw was severely beaten by a father of a child that attends the same childcare facility. A passer-by who tried to defend the young mother was cursed out by the perpetrator. The same day, in Cracow, a young Egyptian working in a neighbourhood kebab restaurant was attacked by three Polish men in their 20s who shouted that Ahmed and Allen, the owner of the kebab joint, ought to ‘go where they came from’, because ‘there is no room for the likes of them in Poland’. One study in Łomża, the location of a camp housing Chechen refugees, indicated that direct contact with refugees decreased a level of acceptance of Muslims (Bilewicz 2011). This contradicts the findings of the surveys conducted by the German Marshall Fund, which assert that people who know immigrants and are friends with refugees are more likely to have favourable opinions about migrants (GMF 2014). However, the authors of the Łomża study concluded that the contact was very superficial (Bilewicz 2011). We have observed the same phenomenon among Polish migrants to the United Kingdom, Germany, or Sweden, who often work alongside Muslims, but don’t bother to get to know them. Instead, they tell tall tales about the dangers that await non-Muslims in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods, especially women who can be attacked and raped at a moment’s notice (on-going field research among Polish migrants in Europe).

It is often said that older people are more conservative and less open to Others. In Poland, the opposite seems to be true. According to a recent opinion poll, 59 per cent of Poles between the ages of 18 to 24 believed that Islam causes danger compared to 37 per cent of Poles age 65 and older (CBOS 2015b). Young Poles were also found to be more prone to accept anti-Islamic hate speech and felt more insecure in the company of Muslims (Stefaniak 2015). Available surveys have not analysed differences of opinion between men and women, although most available research, including our own, indicates that gender plays an important role in the anti-immigrant debates and incidents.

Towards solutions and resolutions

This exploratory study aimed at identifying expressions of anti-immigrant sentiments in public discussions. As we showed above, it is not difficult to find such attitudes. Many have been well documented. Research shows that there are many publications on Islamophobia and more broadly xenophobia in Hungary and in Poland – several of them informed this paper – but far fewer practical resources on how to affect a paradigm shift and change people’s attitudes towards refugees and immigrants, especially Muslim newcomers. Agnieszka Zielonka, a Polish psychologist, says that the situation Poles are now facing, namely the possibility of hosting non-Christian refugees, is new, and therefore they do not know how to behave. Instead of soberly analysing the situation, she adds, they observe their Central European neighbours and follow suit (cited in Wasik 2016).

Ironically, both Poles and Hungarians have a long history of seeking refuge in many countries. Starting in 1942, the port city of Pahlevi (now known as Anzali) became the main landing point for Polish refugees entering Iran from the Soviet Union, receiving up to 2 500 refugees per day. General Anders evacuated 74 000 Polish troops, including approximately 41 000 civilians, many of them children, to Iran. In total, over 116 000 refugees were relocated to Iran. Approximately 5 000–6 000 of the Polish refugees were Jewish (Holocaust Encyclopaedia online n.d.). In the wake of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, close to 200,000 Hungarians crossed into Austria. About 30 000 of these refugees were airlifted to the United States (Pastor 2016). In the early 1980s, thousands of Polish asylum seekers passed through camps in Austria and Germany to seek a new home in Europe, Canada, and the United States. Somehow, this history seems to be forgotten in the contemporary discourses.

In the remainder of this paper, we offer a few examples of possible strategies aimed at improving Poles' and Hungarians' attitudes towards newcomers. Perhaps they will become a springboard for new, creative strategies.

Contrary to popular belief, not all countries with a long history of welcoming immigrants officially endorse multiculturalism. Canada does, but the United States does not. Yet, the US government has developed a legal framework that protects newcomers and guarantees them a broad array of rights. Some of these rights have been ruthlessly curtailed by the current administration, but their decades-long existence provides the basis for protection of immigrants and contestation in the courts of law. In 2016, Poland's right-wing government scrapped a state council tasked with combating racism. Despite an increase in hate crime in the country (Bieńkowski and Świdorska 2017; Patzer 2016), many xenophobic actions are not being prosecuted.

Most policy-makers – in Europe and elsewhere – favour integration, but integration policies are not a substitute for actions at the community level, where the web of local relationships determines the immigrants' experience and affects local attitudes towards newcomers. Advocates and service providers working with migrants suggest that individuals who have personal contact with immigrants have more immigrant-friendly attitudes than persons without such contact. Staff at Migrant Info Point in Poland and members of MigSzol (Migrant Solidarity) in Hungary, for example, organise a lot of informal initiatives, such as international picnics and cultural evenings, to share examples of migrants' cuisine, music, and poetry with local populations. Research confirms the viability of such simple strategies. The more arenas in which the contact is made, the greater the goodwill, says a Norwegian researcher Svein Blom (2010). For example, the proportion of people who believe that most immigrants abuse the social welfare system drops from 40 per cent among persons with no contact with immigrants to 18 per cent among those who are acquainted with immigrants. Correspondingly, the proportion who believe that most immigrants make an important contribution to the society increases from 60 per cent among persons with no contact with immigrants to over 80 per cent among people with contacts with immigrants in three or more arenas. Blom observes:

Attitudes are more positive among respondents who know a large number of immigrants, and who have frequent contact with them (daily). Whether it is the contact with immigrants that generates positive attitudes, or whether it is the positive attitudes that generate contact is unclear. It is most likely to be both (Blom 2010: 145).

The conflict in Łomża mentioned above led to the closing of the refugee camp. However, a few refugees decided to stay and live in the town. A local Foundation 'Ocalenie' (Rescue) organised several information and anti-discrimination campaigns, sporting and artistic events, and a celebration of Refugee Day. Thanks to these actions, the inhabitants of Łomża had a real opportunity to meet and interact with their new neighbours, and to understand their history and needs. As a result, the level of prejudice has fallen in the city. Once again it turned out that personal contact has the power to demolish interpersonal walls.

The power of information and knowledge cannot be underestimated. In the Fall of 2016, Polish anthropologists and ethnologists organised a national convention in Poznań, during which they developed a manifesto against xenophobia, racism and hate speech:

As representatives of ethnology and social and cultural anthropology, we feel special responsibility for the shape of knowledge about culture and society, and we are increasingly concerned about the growing ignorance about migration, refugees, multiculturalism, and national, ethnic or religious identities present in public debate, media, education and politics, read the manifesto.

They also vowed to disseminate information about different cultures and groups of migrants.

In addition to scholars, especially migration scholars, the news media significantly influence the popular perceptions of refugees and migrants, in some cases reinforcing stereotypes. Poles and Hungarians using social media to debate the refugee situation often rely on media stories that have not been vetted. They also tend to cite almost exclusively stories from foreign or diaspora press related to terrorism and other extreme cases of violence involving individuals that are perceived to be foreign-born. There is a need for a more balanced portrayal by Polish media of migration issues at home and abroad. The same holds true for Hungary, where the national service broadcaster and one of the two largest private television stations owned by a Fidesz oligarch are widely seen to be little more than mouthpieces in pushing Fidesz propaganda. There is a need for human interest stories about the refugee flight. A culture of exchange of reliable, balanced information about refugees and migrants is crucial. If the 'them' versus 'us' logic is continuously amplified for short-sighted political purposes as is the case in both countries, there is a real danger of xenophobia, hatred and narrow mindedness becoming the social norm in Polish and Hungarian societies.

Notes

¹ The Treaty of Trianon was the peace agreement of 1920 to formally end World War I between most of the Allies of WWI and the Kingdom of Hungary, the latter being one of the successor states to Austria-Hungary.

² See articles by Laszlo Seres, publicist of the Hungarian weekly, *Heti Világgazdaság* (HVG).

³ At least 14 jihadi terrorists responsible for the 2015 Paris and Brussels attacks entered Schengen through Hungary and spent several weeks in Budapest before continuing on to Belgium (lemonde.fr 2016).

⁴ We monitored the page over a period of two weeks: one week prior and one week after the referendum. During this period, page administrators posted between 1 to 10 posts each day, with posting frequency drastically decreasing following the referendum. The last posts to be published on the page prior to 9 pm were recorded since we assumed users to be most active during the evening hours.


Funding


Research that informs this paper was generously supported by the George Soros Visiting Chair in Public Policy programme at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary.

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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How to cite this article: Goździak E. M., Márton P. (2018). Where the Wild Things Are: Fear of Islam and the Anti-Refugee Rhetoric in Hungary and in Poland. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* 7(2): 125–151.

Political Power, Religion and Gender: The Case of the Vietnamese in Poland

Grażyna Szymańska-Matusiewicz* 

This paper thoroughly examines the gender patterns of religious activity within the Vietnamese – the largest non-European migrant community in Poland. Basing on the result from anthropological field-work which I conducted in two pagodas currently operating in the suburbs of Warsaw I analyse this issue in the light of traditional gender patterns of religious life in Vietnam, as well as in the context of the politicisation of spiritual life under communist rule. The results of my research prove that whether a religious institution will become a ‘women’s sphere’ or will remain under the influence of male actors depends to a great extent on its political emplacement and relations with formal institutions of the Vietnamese state.

Keywords: Vietnamese diaspora; Buddhism; gender

Introduction

While the Vietnamese form the largest non-European migrant community in Poland (Office for Foreigners 2016), relatively little is known about the activities of Vietnamese migrant organisations, including those active in the sphere of religion. Despite the fact that two Vietnamese pagodas currently operate in Poland, two Vietnamese priests serve the needs of the Vietnamese Roman Catholic community and a number of syncretic ‘New-Age’ religious movements have developed on the territory of this country, there is a great paucity of information regarding this aspect of the migrants’ lives. On the other hand, while the Vietnamese diaspora in Poland has been subjected to analysis from many angles, with the most important issues discussed being its members’ integration into Polish society (Górny, Grzymała-Kazłowska, Kępińska, Fihel and Piekut 2007; Halik 1999; Halik and Nowicka 2002), economic situation (Klorek and Szulecka 2013; Wysieńska 2012) and identity dilemmas of the second generation (Szymańska 2006; Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2007), the ‘gender issue’ has thus far been poorly addressed in the literature on the topic. Furthermore, existing studies addressing the gender dimension (Kindler and Szulecka 2013), tend to concentrate exclusively on the economic strategies of migrants.

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To establish an empirical basis for the paper, I conducted ethnographic research from 2014 until 2017 in two Vietnamese pagodas located in the vicinity of Warsaw: Chùa Thiên Phúc and Chùa Nhân Hòa. Ethnography is here understood in accordance with Falzon's (2009: 1) concept of 'an eclectic methodological choice which privileges an engaged, contextually rich and nuanced type of qualitative social research, in which fine grained daily interactions constitute the lifeblood of the data produced'. Thus, in this case the fieldwork involved not only participant observation during multiple religious ceremonies and social gatherings taking place in the pagodas but also informal interviews with pagoda activists and attendants, as well as content analysis of social media (the Facebook profiles of pagodas) and the migrant press (*Que Viet*, the most widely and regularly distributed title).

While focusing in this paper on the case of two Vietnamese pagodas operating in Poland, I argue that gender remains a crucial factor shaping the nature of the social activity of Vietnamese migrants. Analogous to a study by Alexander Soucy (2012), who investigated a diversity of men and women's religious practices in Vietnam, the importance of the gender dimension in the case of the Vietnamese in Poland reveals itself in the living practices of men and women participating in rituals, prayers and the preparation of festivals. Since formal and informal power hierarchies emerging in the course of religious practices are intertwined with hierarchies existing in other spheres of Vietnamese migrant community activity, alongside depicting their interconnectedness with the country of origin I will shed light upon the gender dimension of Vietnamese migrant associations, both religious and non-religious. As I analyse the above-mentioned aspects, I will come to the broader issue of the emancipating role that religious institutions might play for a woman, especially in respect to migrant communities. Therefore, my aim is to provide answers to the following research questions:

- What factors contribute to the empowerment of women in the Vietnamese migrant community in Poland?
- In which spheres of activity do they possess the most power?
- Do the religious institutions create space for women, enabling them to be involved in social activities?
- Can religion be described as a 'women's sphere'?

Religious activity in the Vietnamese diaspora in the network of transnational relations

The role of religion has received some coverage in respect to the diverse groups constituting the Vietnamese diaspora worldwide. Academics use the notion of 'diasporic religion' to analyse the American-Vietnamese community, a group of predominantly refugee origin. While examining the specific nature of Vietnamese 'lived religion' as practiced by the community of Little Saigon, Padgett (2007) points to the interconnectedness of categories such as 'home' (*nhà*) and 'homeland' (*quê hương*) with spiritual and religious experience. The activity of religious institutions 'in exile', as defined by Padgett, manifests itself in the reconstruction of 'the order', which means making efforts to restore things to the way they existed in diasporans' lost homeland (i.e. Vietnam before the year 1975) in a new geographical location. It is important to stress that, because of its post-war origins, the community in the United States is characterised by a strong anti-communist attitude. As a result, Vietnamese Buddhist pagodas in this country have been operating independently of the state institutions of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and have not been affiliated by communist-controlled Buddhist Sangha of Vietnam (*BVS, Giáo Hội Phật Giáo Việt Nam*).

In comparison with the US-based diasporic group and Vietnamese migrant communities in Western Europe, the religious life of Vietnamese communities in Central and Eastern Europe has been shaped by a significantly different historical context. The Vietnamese appeared in this region during the Cold War era as a result of 'fraternal assistance' programmes operating within the 'global socialist ecumene' (Bayly 2009), a community of Soviet Bloc countries. While, in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, contract workers – being a source

of cheap labour in state-owned factories – formed the majority of in-coming Vietnamese (Alamgir 2014; Schwenkel 2015), Poland's 'socialist mobility' was characterised by the prevalence of students who constituted a vast majority of the Vietnamese coming to Poland at that time (Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2014, 2016). It is worth stressing that, although there are no systematic data regarding the gender ratio of students arriving in Poland during the Cold War era, ethnographic evidence (Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2016) suggests that a vast majority of them were male. Despite the differences characterising particular Eastern European countries, all Vietnamese migrant communities inhabiting them can be labelled after Long Le (2014) – who applied Sheffer's (2003) distinction of two kinds of diasporic community – as representing a 'state-bound' diaspora. Since their formation, the communities in CEE countries have maintained intense relations with their country of origin, including with state institutions which exert their power over migrant organisations acting either directly or through various intermediaries such as other migrant associations (Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2016).

In consequence, the development of religious activities within the Polish Vietnamese community has been connected with the issue of relations between religion and state in Vietnam. Therefore, during the Cold War era, when the communist authorities of Vietnam tended to suppress some manifestations of spirituality (such as spirit possession) and strictly supervise others – for example, the activities of Buddhist Sangha (Atsufumi 2016; Endres 2011), religious practices were barely noticeable among representatives of the Vietnamese diaspora in Central and Eastern Europe. This phenomenon can be simply attributed to the temporary nature of a primarily student mobility which did not allow for the development of any established religious institutions. However, the policy of the Vietnamese government constituted a far more important factor. Students delegated to Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) remained under the strict control of both the embassies and the 'group leaders' (*trưởng đoàn*) in the respective CEE countries. Therefore, they were not allowed to develop any forms of social organisation other than those initiated and supervised by the state (Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2016).

After the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, the inflow of Vietnamese to Poland did not cease but the nature of their migration changed significantly. Some of the former contract workers and students decided to stay on in Europe instead of returning to their homeland. Soon they were joined by new waves of economically motivated newcomers from Vietnam who were looking for opportunities offered by emerging markets in countries undergoing the transformation towards a capitalist economy. Bazaars, large open-air markets such as the Decennial in Warsaw, Dong Xuan market in Berlin or Sapa market in Praha (Hüwelmeier 2015; Szulecka 2007) were the most important places in which the migrants' activity was concentrated. The bazaars, aside from being a centre of migrant economic activity, also became areas where religious and spiritual life was manifested. This phenomenon is exemplified by the existence of 'bazaar pagodas' in Berlin (Hüwelmeier 2013) and Warsaw (Hüwelmeier 2015). In the case of the Polish capital, the Thiên Việt pagoda operated in the vicinity of the Decennial Stadium until 2008 as part of a larger institution, the Thăng Long cultural centre owned by a Vietnamese businessman.

Migration is often conceptualised as a factor boosting the religious needs of people re-located to a new spatial and social context. However, the role that religious practices play in the process of adaptation of migrants may be manifold. Padgett (2007) described the Buddhist practices performed by former refugees from the Republic of Vietnam living in the United States as an attempt to reconstruct the 'true essence' of Vietnamese-ness as opposed to the reality of a contemporary communist Vietnamese state. In the case of the Vietnamese from CEE countries, however, relations with the country of origin and attitudes towards the communist order were significantly different. As Hüwelmeier (2013) noticed in her analysis of the spiritual activity of Vietnamese migrants in Germany, emerging religious institutions were inevitably embedded in the transnational context involving relations not only with the country of origin but also with internally diverse segments of the Vietnamese diaspora. Therefore, in a subsequent part of the paper I will consider the impact of embeddedness in a transnational network on the gender dimension in terms of a community's religious activity.

However, to acquire a broader perspective on the problem it is necessary to examine the gender-related patterns of religious institutions seated in Vietnam.

Religion as a ‘women’s sphere’? Gender patterns of religious institutions in Vietnam

This paper uses a concept of gender derived from Raewyl Connell’s theory of gender and power, according to which ‘gender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices (governed by this structure) that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes’ (Connell 1987: 10). This approach – defining gender as an outcome of cultural and historical circumstances which shape social interactions – is particularly relevant in my analysis, which is based on ethnographic observation of diverse social practices, such as social activism and religious worship.

Since, in Vietnamese popular discourse, religious practices are perceived more as a ‘women’s sphere’ (Atsufumi 2016) than as a ‘men’s’ thing, experiencing and practicing religion may seem different between men and women. Therefore, it is of vital importance to include an aspect of gender differentiation in examining the religious activity of Vietnamese migrants. Although the results of an official census conducted in Vietnam show that most Vietnamese claim not to adhere to any religion (81.9 per cent according to GSO 2009), religious practices – including making offerings in pagodas and temples or prayers conducted at home altars – are prevalent. As Leopold Cadière noticed in his classical study *Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Vietnamese*, the majority of Vietnamese people are not religious in the sense of a Western (Judeo-Christian) common understanding of religion; a concept of God is generally absent from their world-view. However, if religion is understood as a set of moral beliefs and practices shaping individual morality, the Vietnamese can be described as ‘deeply religious’ (Cadière 1989). While the stance taken by Cadière could be perceived as obsolete and shaped by Western/Christian perspectives, it gained wide acceptance among contemporary Vietnamese scholars of religion. In most cases, people adopting the above-mentioned practices do not perceive themselves as belonging to any religious denomination, such as Buddhism. In the literature, they are described as adherents of the traditional Vietnamese ‘triple religion’ (*tam giáo*) which is derived from the seventeenth-century concept of *tam giáo đồng nguyên* and originates in three large religions: Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism (Gillespie 2014; Tran 1993). Nowadays, ‘triple religion’ can be defined as a non-institutionalised form of venerating various religious phenomena stemming from the three great traditions. Therefore, it is quite common for the Vietnamese to pay a visit to a Buddhist pagoda (*chùa*), a Confucian temple (*miếu*) or a temple dedicated to local heroes (*đền*) and, at the same time, perceive themselves to be non-religious persons.

The migration context provokes the adaptability of religious institutions, which is a widespread phenomenon and by no means limited to the Vietnamese diaspora. Migrant religious institutions play not only a role as religious centres but they also serve as places where one can strengthen one’s ethnic identity and remain in contact with the culture of the country of origin. Nevertheless, there is yet another factor which significantly impacts on the profile of Vietnamese migrant pagodas – namely the nature of Vietnamese religiosity; it is characterised by a minor role of formal belonging to an institutionalised religion, such as Buddhism, and the importance of a national dimension of a religious cult.

Religion has always played a significant, yet ambiguous, role in shaping the nature of gender relations in Vietnam. Analysis of its historical background has shown the legacy of the two most important religious traditions shaping the Vietnamese culture – Confucianism and Buddhism (Halik 1999; Jamieson 1995). The former was transferred to Vietnam from China as a result of the Chinese invasion in the third century B.C. and is commonly associated with patriarchy and the strict subordination of a woman to a man (Jamieson 1995; Mai and Le 1978; Nguyen 1995). The rule of ‘three subordinations’ by which each woman had to abide is

often invoked to illustrate the idea of the hierarchical gender relations prevalent in Confucian thought. It encompassed subordination to the father during a female's maiden years, to the husband during their marriage and, after the husband's death, to the eldest son. Even nowadays analogous gender-related concepts based on traditional Confucian rites are ubiquitous in Vietnam in the form of ancestor worship practices. The core ideas of ancestor worship have been concentrated around patrilineage (Jellema 2007a, b), which means that women were perceived primarily as an 'external' resource necessary to provide the continuation of a family.

Contrary to these ideas, another religious tradition that originally arrived in Vietnam from China – namely Buddhism – is believed to be a much more egalitarian system promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. For example, women commonly played an important role in village pagodas (Jamieson 1995). A contemporary study by Soucy (2012), who conducted ethnographic research in an urban space of Hanoi, indicates that, while women are prevalent among Buddhist adherents, patterns of religiosity are distinct as far as gender is concerned. Female participation in religious practices varies. Elderly women take part in pilgrimages, while young women opt for more diverse religious performances. On the contrary, religious Buddhist men, mainly the elderly, play a role as 'guardians of the orthodoxy' within the space of a temple. Therefore, even though a pagoda may sometimes become an area of struggle for power between the two genders, the role of women remains undoubtedly of great importance.

Another interesting example of the 'women's sphere' is provided by the case of Vietnamese 'popular' or 'folk' religions which are widely practiced in contemporary Vietnam alongside Buddhist or ancestor-worship practices. Popular religion concentrates around the cult of *Đạo Mẫu* (the Mother Goddess), a deity associated with various mythological or historical figures such as princesses, national heroines or royal concubines. The Mother Goddess cult is also linked with *lên đồng* (spirit possession) practices in which spirits possess the body of a medium who provides a connection between two worlds: the world of human beings and the world of spirits (Endres 2011, 2016; Fjelstad and Nguyen 2006; Ngo 2006). The role of the medium is often played by females who constitute the majority of both mediums and practitioners (Norton 2006). Moreover, during spirit possession rituals, gender roles are commonly transgressed. A woman may take on a male role, which means that she adopts male behaviour – including a choice of clothing style, smoking and consumption of alcohol – during the performance. However, in the case of the opposite sex, the role of 'transgender' mediums has often been taken by trans- or homosexual men who find that acts of impersonating females provides them with a culturally appropriate space in which to express their sexuality.

Throughout Vietnamese history, the role of women has been of much greater importance in ecstatic religious practices involving elements of trance and spirit possession than in the case of practices strictly connected with social hierarchy and order – such as ancestor worship. This conclusion is partially in line with Lewis' (1989) argument according to which women, as an oppressed and marginalised social group, tend to stick to 'marginal' religious cults often connected with shamanist or trance practices which allow them to achieve their goals of self-fulfilment. However, as Fjelstad (1995) argued, spirit possession should not be perceived as a 'marginal' cult in Vietnam, as it is widely performed among the Vietnamese and often intertwines with other religious practices.

In recent history, the authorities of Vietnam have conducted a 'selectively repressive' policy towards religious practices (Malarney 2002). While spirit possession and other informal cults in which women could develop their agency were banned, male-centred ancestor-worship practices were permitted, yet subjected to careful supervision by the state authorities. In the *đổi mới* era¹, which started in 1986, the policy of the state was relaxed. Consequently, various religious phenomena have been revived, including both male-dominated ancestor worship and village festivals, as well as practices incorporating women – such as activities in Buddhist pagodas and spirit-possession rituals. Therefore, women have been provided with the possibility to re-create

spaces for their social activity located inside religious institutions which, in some cases, has enabled them to construct social support networks (Atsufumi 2016; Endres 2011; Luong 2016).

As I have documented, Buddhism is associated with a non-male-dominated representation pattern in the landscape of Vietnamese religious institutions. However, gendered patterns of participation and activity which are significantly different in the case of the two Vietnamese Buddhist pagodas operating in Poland remain to be explored. I will explain the reason behind the distinctiveness of these patterns later in the paper.

***Thiên Phúc* and *Nhân Hòa* pagodas: a ‘women’s sphere’ vs ‘institutions related to formal structures of power’**

The two Vietnamese pagodas located in Laszczki in the vicinity of the Wolka Kosowska trade centres came into being after the closure of the Decennial Stadium (a market) in the centre of Warsaw. The decision to close the market put an end to the *Thăng Long* culture centre situated nearby. With its disappearance, the first Vietnamese pagoda (*Thiên Việt*) housed there, the only Buddhist Vietnamese institution in Poland at that time, would also cease to exist. Therefore, there was a need to rebuild it in a new location. However, the very fact of constructing two separate pagodas resulted from personal conflict between the owner of the *Thang Long* cultural centre – Mr Bùi Anh Thái – and the Association of Vietnamese Admirers of Buddhism in Poland (AVABP, *Stowarzyszenie Wietnamskich Miłośników Buddyzmu w Polsce*), a formally registered migrant organisation which had managed the former *Thiên Việt* pagoda.

The first of the two currently operating temples, *Chùa Thiên Phúc* (Pagoda of Heavenly Happiness), situated on the premises of a private house, was adapted and then opened for religious use in 2012. However, after a two-year strenuous effort to reconstruct the pagoda, its founder, Mr Bùi Anh Thái, repatriated to Vietnam, leaving its management rights to a newly established association, the Association of Vietnamese Buddhists in Poland (AVBP, *Towarzystwo Wietnamskich Buddystów w Polsce*). Currently, the pagoda does not have a resident monk on site but frequent visits are paid by representatives of the Vietnamese Buddhist clergy. Moreover, the pagoda is formally under the supervision of one of the high-ranked Buddhist monks from the Buddhist Sangha of Vietnam, *Thượng tọa Thích Minh Trí*.

In the course of my fieldwork, I visited *Thiên Phúc* pagoda on multiple occasions, both during various holidays and festivities and on regular days when no celebrations were organised. On each and every occasion, women prevailed among the attendees. This phenomenon is not surprising; it can be observed during many religious practices – e.g. in the case of Vietnamese Pentacostals in Germany (Hüwelmeier 2010). What I found particularly interesting during the visits was the fact that women played an important role in managing the pagoda’s affairs, such as organising festivals and welcoming guests, including Polish ‘outsiders’, to the pagoda. When I arrived at the pagoda once with a group of students, Ms Bùi Thi Vân, a prominent activist and the leader of the AVBP, became our guide. Being in the role of a ‘religious expert’, she explained the basic concepts of Buddhism and described the range of pagoda activities for which she was, to a great extent, responsible.

Women also played a decisive role in organising *Tết*, a lunar New Year ceremony, in February 2018. While the role of the religious Master of Ceremonies was occupied by a monk, a male leader, women were the ones who were responsible for scheduling the event and planning and organising the celebration. Not only did they prepare ritual offerings or cook festive meals but they also played decisive roles by announcing the beginning and the end of a particular stage of celebration – such as singing karaoke or obtaining special blessings from the monk.

The importance of women’s agency in the case of the *Thiên Phúc* pagoda is also confirmed by the gender composition of the AVBP’s management. Four out of five members of the management board are female,

including the leader, Ms Bùi Thi Vân. Ms Vân also represents the pagoda during meetings and celebrations such as *Tết* or Women's Day outside the pagoda, which bring together various Vietnamese institutions. Her role as a representative seems to be of particular importance as, in Vietnamese culture, women have been commonly considered responsible only for 'internal matters', the most often connected with domestic affairs, whereas men have been associated with representative functions taking place 'outside' in the wider society (Luong 2016).

Being regarded as a 'women's sphere' might also imply being a place where *lên đồng* (spirit possession) rituals are performed. During one of my visits to the pagoda, I witnessed a mediumship ceremony which was organised especially for a group of scholars, including myself, guests 'from outside' the community. The medium was a middle-aged woman who, during the ceremony, changed into a male outfit, smoked cigarettes and drank vodka in order to indicate that she was possessed by a male spirit. A group of women participating in the ritual explained that *lên đồng* ceremonies were organised in the pagoda whenever somebody expressed a willingness to have the ritual performed for his or her sake. The informants also told us that the female medium was a professional who had offered mediumship services in Vietnam.

In the case of the second pagoda, *Nhân Hòa*, which has been under construction since 2013 (yet is operational), gender patterns seem to be significantly different. Its construction was undertaken by the Association of Vietnamese Admirers of Buddhism in Poland (AVABP), a formally registered migrant organisation which had managed the former *Thiên Việt* pagoda. Unlike the establishment of the *Thiên Phúc* pagoda, which was, to a large extent, a private enterprise of Mr Bùi Anh Thái, the *Nhân Hòa* pagoda was supposed to be a 'community undertaking'. Its funding was, therefore, provided by various Vietnamese enterprises in Poland and by private people. Vietnamese migrant organisations, which maintain manifold connections with Vietnamese state institutions, actively supported the construction of the pagoda. Therefore, it is true to say that the *Nhân Hòa* pagoda was constructed, albeit indirectly, under the auspices of Vietnamese state institutions.

During participant observation which I conducted in the *Nhân Hòa* pagoda, I noticed that events organised on the premises usually attracted fewer participants than those taking place at the *Thiên Phúc* pagoda. However, during all the important celebrations such as the *Hùng Kings'* or *Tết* festivals, I registered the presence of a significant group of male participants. This group consisted of 'men in power', people occupying leadership positions within the Vietnamese migrant community – i.e. presidents and management members of various migrant organisations such as the Association of Vietnamese in Poland and the Association of Vietnamese Businessmen in Poland, the editors of the *Quê Việt* newspaper and representatives of the Vietnamese Embassy.

Like the *Thiên Phúc* pagoda, the *Nhân Hòa* pagoda is also managed by a religious association, the Association of Vietnamese Admirers of Buddhism in Poland (AVABP, *Hội Người VN tại Ba Lan Yêu Đạo Phật*). Contrary to the female-dominated management of the AVBP, the management of the AVABP consists solely of men. During my visits to the pagoda, I encountered either a monk based in Vietnam who was on one of his regular visits to various pagodas in Eastern Europe, or other male activists. They explained the role which Buddhism plays particularly in the life of Vietnamese migrants who commonly experience multiple challenges connected with their precarious situation. Although women were present among the worshippers and were responsible for some preparatory work, especially food preparation, they did not seem to hold any leadership position nor did they seem to have any means of exerting their power.

Gender and political empowerment: the key to understanding a gendered profile of migrant religious institutions

Formal political power is yet another important factor in the analysis of the distinct gender profiles of the two Vietnamese religious institutions. While the *Thiên Phúc* pagoda, being a private enterprise, has maintained ambiguous relations with both the Embassy of Vietnam and Vietnamese organisations cooperating with the Embassy, the bond between the *Nhân Hòa* pagoda and official Vietnamese state institutions seems much more evident due to the involvement of migrant associations politically loyal to the authorities of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in its construction. Therefore, the next part of the paper will examine the gender patterns prevalent in the official power institutions of the Vietnamese state and in Vietnamese migrant associations in Poland.

The issue of gender equality has been a substantial part of the ideology of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) from the beginnings of its coming to power. Similar to the ideological systems of other communist countries inspired by Marxism, the liberation of women from the constraints of ‘ancient regime’, often labeled as ‘feudalism’, was one of the important postulates of the CPV. In 1945, soon after proclaiming the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), a nationwide organisation responsible for women affairs, the Women’s Union, was established. The first constitution of DRV ratified in 1946 included a declaration of men’s and women’s equality. A new Law on Marriage and Family, introduced in 1959, forbade the discriminatory practices which were allowed during French colonial rule, such as arranged marriages and polygyny; it proclaimed the equality of men and women in both private and public spheres of life and provided protection for women in cases of domestic violence (Rydstrom and Drummond 2004).

However, the Vietnamese state has fallen short of these goals. Despite multiple programmes dedicated to the issue of promoting gender equality, such as the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women or the National Strategy on Gender Equality, women seem to face the effects of a ‘glass ceiling’. While, as of 2010, women constituted 33 per cent of members of the Communist Party of Vietnam, they occupied only 23 per cent of both municipal and regional leadership positions. In 2016, Ms Đặng Thị Ngọc Thịnh was appointed Vice-President of Vietnam, thus far the highest formal position ever held by a woman in the communist government of Vietnam; nevertheless, the Vice-President plays a mostly representative role with no actual power. The most important position in the Vietnamese political system, the First Secretary of the CPV, has never been occupied by a woman. However, it should be noted that the shortage of women in the sphere of formal political power is not a feature unique to Vietnam; other former Soviet Bloc countries are a good example of states in which women were barely represented among the highest state officials.

Regarding Vietnamese migrant institutions in Poland, a similar gender pattern can be observed. In the case of the Association of the Vietnamese in Poland (the former *Stowarzyszenie Wietnamczyków w Polsce* ‘*Solidarność i Przyjaźń*’), the largest general-profile organisation having a supervisory role over other organisations, the positions of president and vice-president have, since its establishment, been occupied by men; the management board consists only of male members. Regarding the Association of Vietnamese Businesspeople in Poland, only one board member is female. Other positions, including that of the president, are occupied by men. Accordingly, in order to interpret this fact, it must be remembered that the majority of the formal officially registered migrant associations operate in cooperation with the Embassy of Vietnam and maintain many connections with institutions of the Vietnamese state. For example, leaders of the Association of the Vietnamese in Poland are members of institutions acting in the political system of the Vietnamese state such as the Vietnam Fatherland Front or the Communist Party of Vietnam. The Vietnamese Women’s League, an organisation catering for the needs of Vietnamese women in Poland, receives formal visits from representatives of the

Vietnamese Women's Union, a mass organisation acting within the framework of the Vietnamese communist state (Szymańska-Matusiewicz 2016).

However, gender patterns take a significantly different shape in the case of another category of Vietnamese activists in Poland – members of the anti-communist opposition. Despite the general state-bound profile of a Vietnamese migrant community, pro-democratic activists advocating political change in Vietnam have been active in Poland since the late 1990s. Tôn Văn Anh, who cooperates with a Polish NGO, the Society for the Freedom of Speech, has for many years been the face of the anti-communist movement. This young woman, who went to Poland in her childhood, has often been present in the Polish media during various television broadcasts and in prominent newspapers such as the *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

Within the Vietnamese community there are, however, other women playing prominent roles as pro-democratic movement leaders. Although they might not be widely recognised by the Polish public, they have had a significant reception within the community. Mạc Việt Hồng and Nguyễn Thái Linh are the most important women. The former is the editor-in-chief of *Đàn Chim Việt*, a newspaper opposing the Vietnamese communist government. The latter is one of the organisers of the anti-Chinese protests in May 2014 which resulted in the participation of over 3 000 Vietnamese. Therefore, the involvement of women in public activity seems to be related to the involvement of particular movements or organisations in the formal structures of power connected with the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Conclusions

Analysis of the gender patterns of two Vietnamese religious institutions in Poland – namely the *Thiên Phúc* and *Nhân Hòa* pagodas, reveals differences in the roles played by men and women in both institutions. Placing these cases in the broader context of gendered structures of power in the political system of the Vietnamese state proved that a religious institution may become a 'women's sphere' only if it maintains a certain level of independence from formal political institutions. In the case of the Vietnamese migrant community in Poland, institutions and movements either opposing the Vietnamese state or maintaining their independence from its official structures are the most likely to provide women with the opportunity to play a leadership role. In this respect, religious institutions seem not to differ from other associations. The case of the Vietnamese bazaar pagodas in Berlin dominated by female activists and adherents (Hüwelmeier 2013) suggests that the pattern described can also be observed in other migrant communities located in the area of the former Soviet Bloc. Therefore, the example of Vietnamese migrant religious organisations in Poland illustrates a paradox of communist ideology regarding a 'women's issue'. The paradox transgresses the territory of the Vietnamese state to become a transnational phenomenon affecting migrant communities. While political movements based on Marxist principles advocate gender equality, the formal political structure of Vietnam – an authoritarian country still referring to socialist ideology – seems to effectively exclude women from possessing actual political power both within Vietnam and in the state-bound diaspora.

Notes

¹ *Đổi mới* (Reneval) era is a term used to denote the series of reforms introduced by the Vietnamese government in the 1980s, aimed at reshaping the economic system from centrally-planned towards 'socialist-oriented market economy'.

Funding

The funding of the research constituting the empirical basics of the paper was provided by the grant received from the Polish National Science Centre (NCN), *Political Engagement of Diaspora in the Era of Global Interconnectedness. Vietnamese Migrant Community in Poland and Its Transnational Connections*, no 2017/25/B/HS6/01201.

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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<p>How to cite this article: Szymańska-Matusiewicz G. (2018). Political Power, Religion and Gender: The Case of the Vietnamese in Poland. <i>Central and Eastern European Migration Review</i> 7(2): 153–164.</p>
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‘White Dress, Guests and Presents’: Polish Migrant Families’ Practice of First Communion and Negotiation of Catholic Identities in Wales

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This article examines how migration to Wales modifies Polish Catholic families’ religious practices. It focuses on how the First Communion ceremony is performed. Within the Polish migrant community I witnessed three distinct ways of arranging this. Some families travelled to Poland to their parish churches of origin. Of those who celebrated it in Wales, some did so in a Polish church, others in their children’s Catholic school’s church. These choices had different effects. Holding First Communion in Poland confirmed children’s Polish identity and home-country bonds. It exemplified both the fluidity of the families’ intra-European migration experience and the strength of transnational networking. Holding it in the local Polish parish reinforced both families’ and childrens’ identification as Polish Catholics. In the school’s church, it strengthened migrant families’ negotiations of belonging and their children’s integration into the Welsh locality. Mothers’ active involvement in all settings led some to contest Polish religious customs and revealed emerging identifications related to children’s wellbeing and belonging. Unlike arrangements traditional in Poland, families’ religious practices in Wales seem to have become more individual, less collective.

Keywords: Polish migrants; Wales; mothers; Catholic identity; First Communion ritual

Introduction

In this age of migration, migrants’ religious affiliations help our understanding of their integration processes and interactions with local populations (Saunders, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Snyder 2016). As experiences vary according to gender (Ryan and Vacchelli 2013a), the intersections of religion, gender and migration are crucial for understanding children’s religious upbringing.

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Recently, interest has developed in Muslim communities' and families' religious practices. The issues discussed include mothering through Islam (Ryan and Vacchelli 2013b), Dutch Muslim parents' post-migration religious transmission (Maliepaard and Lubbers 2012) and Muslim upbringing in Britain (Scourfield, Gilliat-Ray, Khan and Otri 2013). In Catholicism, however, the intersection of gender, religion and migration is under-researched.

This article, therefore, discusses Roman Catholicism's intersection with parental faith-transmission to young children, in the context of recent Polish family migration to Britain. Specifically, how migrant families organise their children's First Communion raises several questions:

- Has migration changed families' religious practices? If so, in what ways?
- Is the Polish Catholic habitus reproduced, negotiated, rejected or individualised?
- What are the gender roles in the process?
- To what extent does religious affiliation impact on Polish families' integration into local Welsh communities?

European Union enlargement in 2004 caused unprecedented economic migration to Britain. Although initially characterised by fluidity and unpredictability (Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich 2007), over the last decade Polish economic migrants increasingly exercised freedom of agency under EU citizenship rights (Fihel and Kaczmarczyk 2009). In this same period, Polish economic migration has been much researched. White (2010) studied family migration for economic improvement and Ryan (2009) and Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara (2009) researched social networks in relation to migration decisions. Studies exclusively on Polish families with children focus on education and language. These include Sales, Ryan, Lopez, Rodrigues and D'Angelo (2008) on adults' perceptions of children in London primary-schools. Children's education is considered a factor influencing permanent settlement decisions. Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich (2007) identified the 'better future' motive for family migration; they found 'stayers' chose long-term settlement for 'their children's future'. Studies on Polish families' settlement processes identified social barriers. In Scotland, Sime and McArthur (2008) researched Polish children's access to services; Moskal (2010) and Moskal and Sime (2016) examined their schooling, home relations, language problems and belonging. In another study, Moskal (2011) focused on transnationalism and the role of family in the migration process, while Trevena (2012) investigated schools' roles in 'new' Polish migrants' integration in Britain.

Although the importance of Catholic identity is commonly acknowledged in studies on Poles, this area is much less researched. In the UK, Poles typically manifest Catholicism by church attendance. Two years after EU enlargement, The Guardian reported that one third of the 400 000 Polish immigrants in Britain are practicing Catholics (Bates 2006). Although there are no reliable surveys, recently the Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales considered that 10 per cent go to mass weekly (cited in Mąkosa 2015). Since 2004, Polish Roman Catholic leaders insist that migrants seek Polish parishes and priests instead of attending English-speaking services (Ecumenical News International 2008). For this, they utilise the post-war Polish diaspora networks established within Catholic parishes (Garapich 2008) and Saturday schools (Podhorodecka 2009). Grzymała-Moszczyńska and Krotofil (2010) consider the Polish-language masses give collective support and provide an anchor for those Poles struggling to fit into British multiculturalism and religious diversity. As the Roman Catholic Church system spans across European borders, it provides a framework of continuity. Polish and British Roman Catholic habitus and religious practice, however, differ (I use Bourdieu's [1977: 72] definition of habitus as a structuring mechanism: 'the strategy generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations'). Poles seem to prefer attending Polish-speaking services and exhibit strong attachments to Polish Catholicism's mixture of nationalistic patriotism and religion. As Trzebiatowska's (2010) research in Scotland shows, this causes mismatches between their expectations and those of local Catholic priests and parishioners. Consequently, although Poles see Catholicism and whiteness as assets for acceptance in Britain (Garapich 2008;

Kohn 2007), differences between Polish and British practice may hinder integration into local Catholic communities.

Although Polish pupil numbers in British schools are increasing and religion's role in public life and religious education has become increasingly topical (Hemming 2015), Polish families' and children's Catholic affiliation has not attracted much attention. Exceptions include Trzebiatowska (2010) investigating practices in Scottish Catholic congregations and Mąkosa (2015) looking at the provision of, and access to, religious education in England and Wales in state-run and Catholic schools, Polish Saturday Schools and Polish Catholic Mission parishes. These studies confirm Catholic identity's pivotal role for newly arrived Poles and show the variety of opportunities – besides enrolment into Catholic schools – which parents have to access religious education for their children.

This article addresses this under-researched area. It is based on a one-year ethnographic study in several educational and religious settings in Wales, investigating Polish families' religious practices, negotiations or renegotiations of Catholic identities, and gender roles in children's upbringing. In particular, this study observed the first cohort of post-enlargement Polish Catholic parents' strategies for performing the First Communion ritual in Wales. In the context of family relocation, this article looks at the intersections between religion and Polish nationality, raising questions on whether Poles' Catholic affiliation and religious-identity re/negotiation impact on their integration into Welsh communities and British society as a whole.

Before discussing the theoretical concepts underpinning this paper, I summarise how Poland's religious background relates to the Welsh context.

Religion and religious education in Poland and Britain

In Poland, the Roman Catholic Church strongly impacts on family life. With 95 per cent of the population being Catholics, Catholic values are embedded in Polish society (Mach 2000). These perpetuate the traditional 'Polish Mother' stereotype. To Heinen and Wator (2006: 206), 'the mother is an incarnation of cultural and religious values; she sacrifices herself for both the fatherland and her family, in silence and without expecting anything in return, except symbolic recognition'. Borowik (2010) considers that the post-1989 political and economic transformations barely changed attitudes about religion: religiosity remains based on intertwined national and Catholic identity, supported by the continuity of church practices, Mother Mary cult, traditional social structure and paucity of social security. Although the privatisation of religion is progressing, paradoxically 'it co-exists with a strong social expression of institutional, church-based religiousness' (Borowik 2010: 271). Currently, this 'marriage of religion and politics' (Leszczyńska and Zielińska 2016: 12) remains problematic: the Church's political involvement in women's rights and gender-equality issues is unmistakably visible. In 1991, religion classes became compulsory in public schools and children's upbringing and socialisation into Catholicism remain unquestioned (Zielińska and Zwierzdzyński 2013).

Britain has a long tradition of religious pluralism and, together with late-modern society's individualisation processes, religiosity patterns are changing (Giddens 2002); this includes questioning parental religious teachings, ethnic traditions, religious institutions, belief and practice. As family socialisation into religion appears crucial for inter-generational religious transmission, Scourfield et al. (2013: 10) consider its failure partly attributable to contemporary secularisation processes. Woodhead (2014), however, disputes religion's declining social significance: although churchgoers' numbers decrease, the demand for faith schools is huge. Despite declining church attendance in Britain, religion remains important. Davie (2013) calls this 'believing without belonging'. The choice of school is one way in which parents socialise children into religion. As Britain respects parental rights to religious faith and language (UN 1989), parents bring up their children as they wish.

Regarding the provision of religious education, there are crucial differences between Britain and Poland. Mąkosa (2015: 186) observes that ‘religious education in Poland is of a strictly confessional nature and is referred to as “school catechesis”’. In the UK, state-run community schools teach about Christianity and other religions in society, whereas Catholic schools provide ‘some form of pre-evangelisation and evangelisation aimed at inspiring students’ interest in religious life and making them familiar with the basic notions of Christianity’ (Mąkosa 2015: 188). Polish parents find the state-run schools’ liberal and multicultural approach unfamiliar; the Polish educational system is closer to their values and way of bringing up children. Consequently, they frequently choose Catholic schools, wherever accessible (Podhorodecka 2009).

Arriving in Britain, new migrant families do not automatically belong to the Polish diaspora –Polonia in the UK is far from being a monolithic form. Galasińska (2010) identified three distinctive waves of Polish immigration to the UK: post-war immigrants and post-1989 and post-EU-enlargement migrants. She (2010: 949) found that ‘all groups are emotionally involved in inter-group relations, they negotiate their way of dealing with other Poles and sometimes struggle to cope with different versions of Polishness abroad’. Researching post-war Poles in the UK, Temple and Koterba (2009) found that generational belonging and migration period differentiated the language they used. Fomina (2009) found that those possessing cultural capital intentionally distance themselves from their compatriots in order to bridge the gap with local English people: some experience class or inter-generational tensions, some even avoid all association with Poles. Podhorodecka (2009: 4) notes some discrepancies between the tradition of teaching in *Macierz Polska* (the Association of Polish Supplementary Schools) and new (post-accession migrant) parents’ expectations. All this suggests the existence of tensions between the UK’s old and new Polonia members.

The context of Wales

Wales is a small nation of under three million people, economically disadvantaged compared to England, so less attractive as a migrant work destination. By March 2008, there were over 21 000 Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) registrations in Wales, two-thirds being from Poland (Home Office 2008). Besides cities, Poles are visible in towns with production-line factories (e.g. Llanelli and Merthyr) to which British agencies recruit them. Although new Eastern European migrants tend to settle in well-established ethnic enclaves, Llanelli – a small town in West Wales – demonstrates how work creates new Polish enclaves (Thompson, Chambers and Doleczek 2010). The 2011 Census recorded 546 000 Polish-speakers in England and Wales – in Wales alone, the most common main language after English and Welsh is Polish, with 17 001 speakers (ONS 2011).

A Welsh school census report (ESTYN 2009) showed that, by 2008, over 1 100 Polish children were in Welsh schools – almost three-quarters of all pupils from all 12 EU accession states. In the school year of this research (2010–2011), 1 334 Polish children were in Welsh schools: 774 in primary and 569 in secondary schools; of these, 318 (41 per cent) primary and 271 (48 per cent) secondary pupils attended Catholic schools. Consequently, almost half of all Polish schoolchildren in Wales were receiving Catholic education (SDWG 2011).

Identity, family, gender and religiousness in migration contexts

This paper addresses the identity concept within the context of postmodernity and globalisation debates (Bauman 2001; Castles and Miller 2009; Paleczny 2008). ‘Religious identity’ can encompass a broad range of attitudes, beliefs and practices within both the family and the religious community. Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) consider that inherited religion may provide a primary source of immigrants’ identity. Although religious iden-

tity correlates family religious beliefs and practices (Smyth 2009), exactly how parents influence their children's religiosity is still debated and even less is known about how gender differences affect religious transmission.

The literature on the sociology of religion recognises that, in the Christian West, women are more religious than men and older people are more involved in religious practices than younger ones (Davie 2013). Older women are especially considered to be the generational transmitters of values and religion. A survey in six European countries found that mothers were generally more involved in religious practice than fathers although, amongst Muslims, both fathers and mothers were involved in their children's faith formation (Smyth 2009). Within the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Benedict XVI expressed his appreciation of grandmothing and addressed grandmothers' educational tasks in his Papal Blessing (Shaw 2012). While the Religious Transmission Thesis may see children as passive, the New Childhood Perspective recognises children's involvement in constructing their own identities, including religious identities (Connolly 2007). Children's awareness of religious affiliation can manifest itself very early on. In Northern Ireland, Connolly, Smith and Kelly (2002) found that some three-years-olds were able to distinguish Catholics from Protestants.

In this article, I define the participants' religious identity as self-identification with Catholicism's religious traditions. I look specifically into religious-group membership and participation in religious events like churchgoing and the First Communion ritual. The act of migrating from Poland to the UK seems to be a point of departure – a defining point for religious identity re-negotiations. For religiosity, I use Borowik's (2010: 263–264) definition:

By religiosity I will here understand the various forms and meanings in which is manifested the basic, subjective conviction that human life has a sense other than biological existence. Meanings are either culturally inherited or acquired in individual quests; they are expressible beliefs about the nature of man and the world, about purpose and destiny, moral principle, usually called doctrine, about worldview or ideology. Forms are actions that stem from beliefs; they are expressed in holding and displaying an attachment to symbols, in attendance in worship, in membership in a community.

My analysis focuses predominantly on family and community practices, particularly the meanings underlying mothers' decision-making regarding their children's First Communion ritual and Church membership.

One distinctive characteristic of contemporary migration is the feminisation of both migration and labour (OECD 2010). Standing (2011) observes that migration circumstances make women carry a 'triple burden': work, child-care and relative-care. He records the multitasking pressure on women: short-notice availability for precarious out-of-home jobs and child-care. Transnational lives add cross-border care as a further burden. As Baldassar and Merla (2014: 12) note, this involves extended family members in complex inter-activities and takes various forms: 'hands-on', 'caring-for' and 'caring-about'.

Research on women's agency in transnational religious contexts explores potential changes in religiosity. Post-migration experiences may increase religious practice, as it does for Polish migrant women in Rome (Malek 2008) or secularise attitudes (Voicu 2009). In Iceland, Polish female migrants' new life contexts triggered critical reflection on sacredness, leading to individual rather than institutional religiosity (Koralewska 2016). Interweaving spirituality and reproductive factors, such varied experiences exemplify religiosity's complexity (Woodhead 2007). Women can actively reinterpret religious tradition. In contemporary America, Avishai (2010: 48) considers that even conservative religions can be a source of new identity, not a deprivation of women's free choice. Such positive aspects of females' position within conservative religions, however, depends on cultural expectations. The structures and realities of their lives curtail their ability to adapt religious practices. In this context, I explore how Roman Catholic Polish migrant mothers manage religious change – in the methods section below, I explain their special role in this research.

Methods

This paper draws on ESRC-funded doctoral research with a group of 27 Polish-born children aged 8–12 and their families, who migrated to Wales in or after 2004; all had lived between one and five years in Wales. This study researched children's identity negotiations, including Polish Catholic family practices' impacts thereon. Employing the 'New' Sociology of Childhood perspective (Prout 2005), it was located within transnational and mobile childhood debates (Ní Laoire, Carpena-Méndez, Tyrrell and White 2010). It acknowledged family as a major source of these middle-childhood children's identifications (Scourfield, Dicks, Drakeford, and Davies 2006). To best suit the holistic exploration of transnational childhoods, an ethnographic design was chosen (Punch 2007). Valuing children's participation, it utilised child-centred perspectives, subjective accounts and their own work (Greene and Hill 2005).

Fieldwork

The study was conducted in an urban area of Wales. Fieldwork was undertaken from September 2010 to July 2011 in two schools, and supplemented by participant observation sessions in two Catholic churches and Polish community gatherings mostly in the Polish Club. One school setting was a state-maintained Roman Catholic primary, St Luke's, located in the most ethnically diverse part of town. Its pupils speak 21 different home languages, with Poles the biggest minority-language group at 15 per cent. From this school, ten girls and four boys from years 4, 5 and 6, aged 8–11, participated in the research. The second institution was a Polish Saturday School where, on Saturdays, nearly 60 (mostly) primary-school-age children learn the Polish language and history and the Catholic religion. From among them, six girls and seven boys aged 8–12 took part. Observations were also undertaken in two Roman Catholic churches. The first, St Luke's, is attended by children from three Catholic schools in the area. The liturgy for primary-school children takes place during the 10am Sunday mass. The second was a Polish parish church in another ethnically diverse area of town. The Saturday evening mass and 11am Sunday mass are both in Polish. The church has two Polish priests. Before entering any research settings to undertake observations and generate data with their children, I obtained consent from all the parents. For the institutions' approvals, I wrote letters describing my research aims and ethical considerations. I also placed announcements in church porches. The priests in both parishes permitted me to undertake participant observation during masses.

Data

This research design allowed me to collect data on families' and children's lives and religious practices in Wales. Observations were recorded in field notes. Reconstruction of the field was predominantly in Polish, as participants used their first language throughout. Participant observation sessions totalled 101 days (409 hours) in the field. For generating data on families' religious practices, time spent at the Polish church, within the Polish community, at the Polish Club and during social events at St Luke's community hall proved particularly fruitful. In both schools, I also conducted focus groups and interviews with children, parents, school staff, priests and Polish community members, together with six individual interviews with parents and two group interviews with mothers. Additionally, the ethnographic design helped me to explore environments and life-space in home neighbourhoods, as it generated non-recorded 'walking conversations' with mothers, fathers and other family members – mostly grandmothers and aunts – on the way to and from parking, school, after-school activities, shops and church. Family questionnaires gathered information about household characteristics, parental education and employment.

Overall, the researched families' motives for migration were economic. They came to Wales from both villages and big cities in all regions of Poland. Of the study's 27 children, 22 had both parents in Wales and five, only single mothers. The parents' ages ranged from 25 to 45 years. Many (especially mothers) were educated to, or above, Polish *Matura* level (equivalent to three A-levels). In Wales, however, they performed low-skilled jobs, confirming the findings of Dustmann, Frattini and Preston (2007) on new migrants' employment in the UK. Out of 27 households, only five mothers said they were 'housewives' and not in employment. In 22 households both parents' (or single mothers') employment was outside the home.

The children themselves generated visual data: charts, drawings, diaries, collectively drawn maps, videos and over 500 photographs. Information on their experiences includes that gathered from their 'Important events in my life', 'My three wishes', 'My home' and 'Important places I visit' charts. From the data, the children appear thoroughly immersed in their families' religious practices. Some children's responses strikingly reveal how a Catholic upbringing impacts their identities. For example, among eight-year-olds, Marta named her 'best friend' as 'Jesus' and Alicja's 'Three wishes' included 'more pilgrimages'. During our interview Alicja described her family's pilgrimages to Częstochowa sanctuary every August: 'I was there even in my mother's womb'. Clearly, some families' religious practice is stronger than others, so may make stronger impacts on individual children's identities. As I observed, the effect of Catholic symbols seems to depend on a child's gender and individual characteristics. Girls were more prone than boys, for example, to talk about First Communion clothing. Attendance at mass, the frequency of exposure to religious experiences and being at a Catholic school further increase children's social contacts within the Catholic environment, though this particularly depends on the intensity of the parental engagement in Catholic rituals.

Most of these children clearly self-identified as Catholics. In my study's card-choice exercise, 16 children chose the Catholic identity label as important. In their 'Important events in my life' charts, most children marked Catholic sacraments: 'I was baptised', 'I had my First Communion' or both. These accorded equal importance to their 'First Communion' as to 'coming to Wales/England' (many confused Wales with England) or 'starting school'. Occurring at the age of eight, however, First Communion was more recent, which possibly influenced their prioritisation. In 'Important photos', one boy presented his First Communion '*Pamiątka Pierwszej Komunii Świętej*' (devotional picture) and three children produced photographs of their church. In the 'Important places I visit' and 'My favourite things to do' charts, 11 children marked church as a place they visit or go to on Sundays.

Gender roles in this research

In my ethnographic study with migrant children and their parents, in order to ensure the equal involvement of both I sent letters to each child's household asking for parental consent. Early on in the research, however, the mothers emerged as the predominant 'front-line officers' for contacts with school, church and community. This evidenced the division of labour traditional in Polish families. Although I met and conversed with the fathers regularly in all research settings, the most recorded data are from female participants – mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, cousins and girlfriends. Data analysis, interview transcripts, field notes and my research-diary entries further this gender imbalance. Although my positionality as a female researcher and teacher partly explains this, the data materialise Polish presumptions of culturally ascribed female roles in child-care and domesticity. The issue of First Communion also evidenced this gender bias, as it was predominantly the mothers who voiced, reflected, shared and recalled memories of this event.

To analyse this volume of data, I employed grounded theory and thematic analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). With regards to validity and reliability, although some Polish families hold different cultural values, this group appears typical of others I have visited; nevertheless, in Wales, they seem representative of

families throughout Britain, whose children are brought up in similar circumstances – exposed to collective national and religious identities.

Celebrating the First Communion

In the several educational and religious settings studied, I observed religious practice evolving and adapting to accommodate migration circumstances. The importance that families accord to the First Communion became clear early on: it represents a milestone in a Catholic family's life. From September, eight-year-old children attended First Communion preparation classes at the Polish Club and parents had meetings at church. As migration inevitably modifies the social aspects of this ceremony, the interaction of inherited religious tradition and individualised family religious habitus determine its form. The parents had three distinct alternatives: in Poland in their church parishes of origin, in Wales in a Polish parish or in their children's Catholic school's church. Which they choose affects, and is affected by, how children are socialised into the Catholic religion and negotiate their religious identities. These three strategies reflect Polish families' transnational multiple belongings. This conforms to Anthias' (2002: 500) observation that 'the migrant is dynamically placed in three locales and their intersection: the society of migration, the homeland and the migrant group'. This was confirmed in my participant observation and the mothers' narratives which showed how, whilst adhering to their religious heritage, families create new transnational practices and negotiate their identities.

Celebrating the First Communion in Poland

For their children's First Communion, some families travel to Poland to their parishes of origin. This exemplifies both the fluidity of the families' intra-European migration experience and the strength of transnational networks. Parental post-experience narratives emphasise the distinctiveness of the traditional Polish communion as a whole-family and community affair that boosts the ritual's meaning and importance. When I interviewed mothers in the Polish Club, one described the family celebration in Poland with obvious enthusiasm:

The priest gave me the letter confirming that my daughter attended First Communion preparation classes here. But our priest in my parish knows everything, because he knows us and we were on the list there. So she already has everything waiting for her in Poland, my sister bought her a white dress, gloves, a white bag, a religious medal (medalik), a little prayer book, a candle, everything. No, no, only the shoes I bought here. [...] We're going to Poland on Saturday but my sister has already organised everything. A few months ago she booked the restaurant there; you know you have to do it months in advance: everybody wants to go when the family is big. We have sent her money for that. I come from a family of five, so many people come for communion: two of my brothers with their families and three of us, I mean sisters and a godmother and godfather with their families, my parents and my husband's, it's lots of people, and of course the children. The restaurant reception is for 40 people. At church the ceremony starts at 10 so finishes at noon, then photos at church, so we booked dinner at 1 o'clock; we shouldn't be late there. Then we will have supper as well at the restaurant (excited). You know, my daughter, she doesn't even imagine how it would be to have her First Communion in Poland: lots of presents, lots of guests.... Yes, she knows about the presents (laughing). You know we will not save on that, it is just once in her lifetime. But... I'm only sad that she won't stay in Poland for the 'White Week' (Biały tydzień) and won't go with these children to Częstochowa monastery as we have to come back to Wales immediately afterwards, as my husband has only 10 days' holiday.

The Catholic Church spans national boundaries so, despite living in Wales for four years, this mother declares that her family's religious affiliation is in Poland – 'our priest in my parish' knows everything about their migration: he received a report from the Polish parish priest in Wales. Far from feeling detached from her homeland, she still belongs to her old parish in Poland and wants her daughter to have her First Communion there. As she is physically absent from Poland, however, her sister takes on the organising role. As this mother explains, the ritual of First Communion in Poland had been planned well ahead and substantial monetary resources have been allocated for the day itself. Her phrase 'guests and presents' reoccurred many times in other participants' narratives, implying the commonality of the celebration. As she stresses, for a Catholic child this way of celebrating is a memorable 'once in a lifetime' experience which will be treasured and recorded in photos and devotional presents. It is also evident that children expect and are excited about presents and money.

This mother's use of the phrase 'she doesn't even imagine...' relates to the child's special experience on that day. Children are on display during the liturgy (Orsi 2004). This display, however, extends beyond the sacrament and religious experience to the impressive family and church gathering. The children feel special because they are in the spotlight – given special attention, admired, photographed and given presents. This commercialised aspect of the First Communion celebration in Poland is present throughout the data. For example, the 'White dress' has strong symbolic value – special dresses increase the children's visibility. Combined with the show's exceptionality, this puts heavy pressure on parents to spend lavishly on the celebration. Additionally, parents have to buy many sacrament-specific accessories for their children, like candles, religious medals, etc.

In Poland, the First Communion is celebrated primarily on a family level but usually exceeds family and time boundaries. It is a whole-community affair and the ritual is prolonged by church and school organisations. Before the event, the parents are expected to attend meetings and pay for presents and church decoration. After it, the children's attendance at evening masses during the 'White Week' in May is obligatory. Many schools arrange daytrips to the Sanctuary of the Black Madonna in Częstochowa. The mass and collective experience may be repeated in June during the Corpus Christi procession, when First Communion girls in white dresses and boys in suits join local parish processions down the streets. Then, the following year, there will be the anniversary of their First Communion when they attend church with the candles blessed at the previous year's celebration.

As this mother told me, her childhood memories make her familiar with all these associated celebrations, as this is the old tradition in Poland. Mothers recall their own Polish church memories and the importance of 'white dress, guests and presents'. For her generation, the sacrament was incorporated into the whole-life tableau of memories, e.g. the framed souvenir picture from the person's First Communion (*Pamiątka Pierwszej Komunii Świętej*) was kept on display for many years. She is very emotionally involved and regrets that her daughter's religious ritual will be cut short as the family must return to Wales due to work. She feels that, because of migration, her daughter's ritual is incomplete. In Poland, all the associated events are important and written into the script of being a Catholic, hence fully Polish, child.

She, like two other mothers to whom I spoke about First Communion in Poland, constructed it as a major step in their children's life and stressed the importance of it being experienced in Poland. However, one mother admitted that intergenerational family pressure influenced her decision to travel to Poland: 'My mother said that she would organise everything so we didn't want to argue about that – at the end of the day it's for her only granddaughter'. These narratives show how mothers in Wales adhere to their religious heritage but create new transnational practice. I now describe how the Polish ceremony differs from that in a Polish-speaking parish in Wales.

First Communion in a Polish parish in Wales

Many families chose not to travel to Poland for their children's First Communion. These, however, did not entirely lose the experience of a Polish ceremony.

The 20 children taking their First Communion in Wales were prepared for several months at Saturday School. Some of them attend Catholic schools; others go to various state-run community schools, which their families chose due to their precarious employment, temporary accommodation, indecisiveness about the duration of their stay, lack of social-network advice and, especially, unfamiliarity with the education system when they had arrived in Wales (WAG 2008). As one mother said: 'When I came I didn't know nor think about school but in a year she was five. We sent her to the nearest school. But I'll change it for Catholic in secondary'. Similarly, one boy's parents moved him to a Catholic school after a year in a community school. This postponed his Communion in the Polish parish, which affected him strongly. As 'Important events in my life', he wrote, 'I had my Communion later, when I was eleven'.

In this parish, the First Communion was celebrated in April not in May, the typical month for Polish confirmations. A Saturday School religious teacher described this experience:

We didn't have many rehearsals: just the day before, on Friday, and Communion was on Saturday afternoon. Children were singing, somehow. It's all very different when you compare with Poland. First, is the church decoration, here it's very poor. Second, children are singing much more in Poland. And third, in Poland the church is overcrowded and here the church is empty. In Poland you can see girls wearing white dresses and everybody walking to church. Here they get into the car and go away, there's a lack of family spirit. Here, there isn't any atmosphere, nothing, you only go to church and that's it! (...) At my church in Poland the church is blaring, people are singing at full volume, bursting with energy, here without any life. (...) The First Communion souvenirs I always buy in Częstochowa. The parents were satisfied this year; they liked the rosary, little prayers books and candles I bought. We always take a group photograph with candles in front of the altar.

Despite the great effort made to transplant the First Communion's religious habitus from Poland to Wales, the scarcity of invited guests left the church feeling empty, compromising the 'solemnity' of the moment. The teachers followed the same curriculum (although shorter) and bought devotional souvenirs in Częstochowa (helped by parents' frequent travel to Poland). Nevertheless, the result fell far short of how the celebration looks and feels in Poland.

Additionally, the parents challenged some aspects of the celebration and associated power structures. As one mother described it, in Poland religious teachers usually have a decisive voice about the children's clothing, souvenirs and flowers for church decoration. In Wales, however, the parents were unwilling to pay for church decoration. Having already bought the 'parish present', they did not want to spend any more. To organise the celebration in Wales, parents must accommodate its demands with their scanty migrant resources: little money and limited accommodation for family members coming over from Poland. I witnessed attempts to enforce families' church attendance. For example, at the Sunday mass following First Communion, the Polish priest counted only half the children present. His sermon cited this as an inappropriate parental attitude to children's upbringing. Similarly, one teacher's judgment on a mother exemplifies the pressure put on parents to attend Sunday mass: 'She said they go to Welsh [Catholic] church masses but I know they don't. Sometimes children themselves say that they don't go to church or that their mothers work on Sundays'. Another teacher expressed similar sentiments: 'Some parents don't attend any of the masses, neither in the Welsh [Catholic] nor the Polish church'. Such comments suggest that the church's control over families' religious practices is

weakening. Additionally, the less authoritative tone which the priests use in Welsh Catholic parishes emboldens some parents to contest their inherited habitus. Some, for instance, expressed resentment when comparing practices in Polish-speaking masses with those in English-speaking ones. After the latter, the priest shakes hands with parishioners in the church doorway. Polish masses lack this friendly gesture. All this is evidence that the mobility that characterises migration may increase parents' independent agency in their religious practice.

Conversely, the choice of setting strengthened families' identification as Polish Catholics. As I observed, the priest starts every mass with: 'We especially welcome our countrymen, who came from our motherland'. This is a constant reminder of people being newcomers who are embraced by the Polish church. Consequently, this Polish parish fulfills its role as an 'anchor' for this migrant community (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2018; Grzymała-Moszczyńska and Krotofil 2010). It remains attractive for parents who want to pass Catholicism on to their children.

Unlike the group which Trzebiatowska (2010) studied in Scotland, parents in this Welsh study do not automatically adhere to the stereotypical image constructed for them as Polish Catholics. Due to their mobility and transnational practices, their religious habitus can no longer be taken for granted. Furthermore, this Welsh context required some modifications to how the First Communion was celebrated, frustrating attempts to replicate its Polish form. This appeared to cause some tension and disappointment, especially by comparison to practices in Poland.

First Communion at an English-speaking Welsh parish

Choosing to have the sacrament of First Communion in St Luke's English-speaking parish church appears a natural consequence of having chosen a Catholic school for their children in the first place. First Communion preparation is incorporated into the school curriculum. Most parents share the view that 'it is better when the child goes with her class at school'. St Luke's mothers' narratives commonly state that being with 'other children' (their English-speaking classmates) is to their children's benefit. Their rationale is two-fold: this lets the children feel part of their peer-group, and they belong in the school's Catholic parish.

I witnessed the First Communion mass at St Luke's church. There were three Polish girls in the group of over 20 children from the school.

Sunday Mass at 2 pm. In front of the church I spotted some of the parents from school. I entered the church. I did not notice anything special, apart from more people than on an ordinary children's Sunday mass. I immediately saw the headteacher who greeted me, as usual, in Polish: Jak się masz? (How are you?) Then, standing in front of the altar, he told us which hymn we will start with and when to clap. The church was slowly filling up. I could see many teachers and teaching assistants from St Luke's. I joined the Polish assistant. (...) When the congregation started singing the entrance hymn: 'The spirit lives to set us free', the group of children started walking, one after another, through the church. Girls were wearing white dresses and many had veils. Boys were in suits. I noticed that the three Polish girls were not wearing veils, but had professionally done hair. (...) When the hymn: 'This is my body' started, the children, one by one, with their parents went to the altar to take the holy wafer from the priest (Field notes 12 June 2011).

The atmosphere in this church was festive but resembled that of a normal Sunday. As usual, the congregation seemed very familiar with the headteacher. He and his teachers and assistants have the role of linking the school and the church, thus embedding the one within the other: a uniting experience for children. The Polish community was well represented in the congregation, not only by families of First Communion girls but also

by other Polish families from the school and former students. Like all the other First Communion children, the three Polish girls looked and felt special: excited, happy to be in the spotlight and admired in their beautiful outfits. The only visual difference was that Polish girls do not wear veils. By regular participation in parish life, these girls are familiar with how the mass is organised in Wales. For example, First Communion children sit together with their parents (in Poland, they sit in a group and are supervised by their religious teachers).

I asked some mothers how the First Communion experience differed between Poland and Wales. One particularly appreciated how Welsh Catholicism is practiced. She described the experience of inviting her daughter's father (whom she had divorced) from Poland.

In Poland many things would not be possible for me as a single mother. I wouldn't know how to do it, but here it was different. Her father came for one week, stayed with us at my flat. It was good, my daughter was so happy. I feel that we passed the exam as parents.

She feels that Poland's norms would preclude certain behaviours, e.g. letting her ex-husband stay with her. For her it is a liberating experience: you do not need to be a married couple to care for your child. She values the Welsh parish's practices because, unlike in Poland, she does not feel stigmatised for being a single mother. Her new transnational way of life and increased self-esteem made her feel secure enough to invite him.

Another mother talked about how stress-free the atmosphere felt. She compared this celebration to those in Poland:

I didn't feel it was very special from other masses I attended, like Christmas Carol singing or the end of the school year mass. Yes, there were some rehearsals before that Sunday. But there weren't any strict rules about the clothes children have to wear. For example, I remember girls were wearing very different dresses, either long or short, and boys various suits, and everybody seems to be very relaxed about it. In Poland, as a parent, you have to go for church meetings, on strict dates. If you don't go you're in trouble, while here this is much more relaxed.

Another also made comparisons, primarily about her son's religious experience:

I'm glad that my son had the communion at St Luke's. Here is modesty. Here in the church, children can better concentrate on the sacrament, not on all these circumstances/otoczka, like in Poland. No guests, so not all the hassle with food and invitations. Here after church it was just us and my parents. Nobody else.

Her preference for 'modesty' and rejection of the 'circumstances' related to the traditional Polish way of celebration highlights the differences between First Communion practices in Polish and Welsh Catholic churches. She focuses on the sacrament as the core of the day, not the festive social side. She constructs the experience as stripped of the non-religious additions that she negatively associates with Polish celebrations. She spurned inviting 'guests' – referring negatively to the main theme running through most participants' narratives: 'white dress, guests and presents'.

Although her view differs from those who prefer to celebrate in a bigger family group, it echoes other mothers' concerns about the difficulties associated with providing for family members invited from Poland. Children are always excited when these kin visit them. From an adult's perspective, however, short-stay visitors for this occasion, often elderly grandparents or Godparents, cause stress. They may not understand the

reality of migration life, so easily disrupt everyday school and work routines. One mother described such a visit:

My mother-in-law was complaining; she didn't understand any English so at church it was hard for her. Then next day we had to go to work; she didn't go anywhere on her own, only with me. It was a strain on her and on me. She was simply bored; she cooked and then... the only thing she could do was to watch [Polish] television.

The English-language service and participation in an unfamiliar church environment may alienate elderly guests – the most commonly invited of whom are grandmothers. Their presence, however, is generally highly appreciated, despite the cultural mismatches their visit may cause. Their attendance at the First Communion ritual ensures that the Catholic religion is passed on to the children as an inter-generational continuity. However, first and foremost, as I witnessed, grandmother's visits are a source of immense joy for the children.

Polish families at St Luke's

How does the considerable size of the Polish community that formed around St Luke's impact on its members' integration into Welsh society?

The concentration of Polish children at St Luke's is largely due to Polish social networking activities. Prevalent amongst parental narratives is the issue of utilising social capital – e.g. knowing people ('We worked together and she told me about the school'), family chain migration ('Now my brother's children are also at the school') or convenience due to bypassing the language barrier (e.g. having Polish-speaking assistance and translation). St Luke's enjoys 'a good school' reputation in the Polish community. Its headteacher emphasises the school's Catholic inclusion ethos and that 'the word "Catholic" means universal'. This message may be particularly appealing to newly arrived Polish migrant families. The St Luke's setting reassures parents with its familiar Catholic symbolism – Jesus on the cross, Mother Mary, a portrait of John Paul II. Catholicism's visual symbolic language does not require English to be spoken in order to understand. Furthermore, in line with her support-teacher responsibilities, the Polish assistant actively establishes relationships between the school, the church and the Polish community. Many parents recognise and value this 'Home, School and Church' triad from their own upbringing in Poland. St Luke's daily school life is embedded in Catholic practice. Religious rituals build a cohesive school community and a sense of belonging (Hemming 2011: 59).

In this school, Polish children form a visible national group. This collective identity reinforces their embedment into school and parish life. The headteacher considers that the Polish identity is well incorporated into the school's English-speaking parish's practice:

I was in church on Sunday and I saw the Polish families there. The children were not only following the service by reading in English but also at the end of the service meeting there was the Polish community and talking in their home language, Polish. For them to be secure in both ways is a great thing, for me as a member of this community, to see.

The Polish group therefore fits well into the schools' promotion of inclusion and celebration of diversity. This I witnessed when the Day of Nationalities was celebrated at church and when Poles represented the school at the European Day of Languages. In such ways, Polish national identity is embedded into Welsh Catholic institutional arrangements.

On the other hand, attachments are built differently when Polish-language use reinforces Polish nationality and Polish Catholicism, and Catholicism is performed in the way it is in Poland. This distinguishes the 'Polish group' from other parishioners. Additionally, twice in the school year, the Polish assistant and several mothers take the children straight from school to church to pray in a traditionally Polish mode: '*Różaniec*' in October and '*Majówka*' in May. Such national-identity exclusiveness is particularly conspicuous in Polish patriotism and Catholicism. One Saturday evening, close to the anniversary of John Paul II becoming Pope (16 October 1978), the Polish assistant organised Rosary Prayers (*Tajemnice Różańca*). More than 20 primary- and secondary-school children and their mothers attended.

In this situation, the construction of 'different' religious identities is largely due to the way in which Polish mothers practice prayers. Orsi (2004: 102) sees the role of prayers as 'making and substantiating the religious world adults and children constituted and inhabited together'. In this particular context, the way in which children are disciplined to pray in a particular way on national occasions reproduces ethnic, linguistic and national belonging. However, although strengthening the Polish-speaking community, this fusion of nationalism and Catholicism exacerbates otherness. Discussing community cohesion, Hemming (2011: 64) noted that some religious communities' practices are potentially excluding. Although Polish families build connections with English-speaking members of the congregation through their children's activities at St Luke's, Polish mothers' specific religious practice may send self-exclusion messages. In St Luke's church community, however, social events for Polish families in the church hall increase the opportunities to extend their social networks. I attended two: *Andrzejki* (St Andrew's Day, 30 November) and *Ostatki* (before the start of Lent). Everybody brought food; some children performed. St Luke's headteacher, canteen staff and both Polish and English-speaking parish priests came. Not one parishioner did.

Conclusions

This paper describes Polish migrant families' religious practices and Catholic-identity negotiations when residing in Wales. Although all the families studied were committed to passing on their religion to their children, the migration situation required them to practice Catholicism in new ways.

For their children's First Communion, for instance, 'White dress, guests and presents' – an easily identifiable symbol of Polish Catholic ritual – emerged as a significant theme in parents', children's and teachers' narratives. This phrase is also symbolically significant, as all participants could locate themselves by positively relating to it, contesting it, placing themselves outside the experience or even devaluing it. Unavoidably, however, migration modified how families organised their First Communion religious and social practices. Some travelled to Poland to their church parishes of origin. Some celebrated it in Wales: either in a Polish parish or in their children's school parish. Individual preferences over where, how and when to celebrate this ritual highlighted Catholic identity and Polish nationality intersections and priority tensions. Also, the related religious identity negotiations appeared to have some impact on belonging in and integration into their local Welsh communities.

This choice of holding the event in Poland exemplifies both the fluidity of these families' intra-European migration experience and the strength of transnational networking. Parental post-experience narratives emphasised the distinctiveness of the traditional Polish communion as a whole-family and community affair, which boosts the ritual's meaning and importance. However, Polish identity and Catholic habitus reproduction are rooted not only in migrants' transnational practices but also in their participation in Polish diaspora life in Wales. Although some found celebrating First Communion in the Polish parish in Wales disappointing compared with the celebration in Poland, this actually strengthened both the families' and the children's identification as Polish Catholics. The Polish parish – and club – proved to be additional identity 'anchors' and

platforms for social networking. However, that some parents negotiated and modified the Polish version of First Communion suggests that the migration situation can change parent–church power relations.

Parents who celebrated the First Communion in a Welsh parish believed that this eased their negotiations of belonging and integration into their locality. It also, however, led some to criticise and contest traditional Polish religious customs. For them, Welsh Catholic practice appeared better suited to their needs. Unlike the traditional way of performing the First Communion in Poland, in Wales their involvement in this ritual seems to have become more individually independent, less collectively subservient. Besides having more autonomy in choosing where, how and when to have the First Communion, migration required its form to be modified. This freedom to change the previously rigid has given families more decisive individualised voices. Consequently, their identities are evolving from Polish Catholic collectivism towards individualisation, so substantiating Bauman's (2001) thesis of identification in an age of migration. This raises questions about how the long-established Polish parishes should change, both to accommodate new migrants' needs and to harmonise the Polish Catholic habitus with British context.

The new cohort of Polish migrants show some evidence of departing from the 'core' values of language and religion which the old postwar diaspora was proud to preserve. Nonetheless, these new transnational families' communication with Poland by Internet and Skype helps to keep these alive. Although secular British society is changing families' lifestyles, this group shows no evidence of disconnecting from Catholicism. Instead, my findings indicate that belonging to their church anchors them in a changing world, thus confirming Paleczny's (2008) observations.

Additionally, my research data confirmed presumptions of culturally ascribed female roles in child-care and religious practices. Women activated transnational and family networks to organise the ritual and grandmothers willingly accepted their role as inter-generational transmitters of values and religion. Despite their migration to Wales, the women in this study still conform to the traditional 'Polish Mother' stereotype. Nonetheless, some mothers appeared to reinterpret religious tradition and re/negotiate their families' Catholic identities. One particularly striking form of Polish religious identity negotiation was seen in St Luke's English-speaking church. On the one hand, all mothers value their children's integration into peer groups, school and community above their distinctively separate Polish Catholic identity; however, on the other, some tried to incorporate the traditional Polish Catholic habitus into universal Catholicism. These national prayers and celebrations reinforce Polish Catholicism, nationalism and language; such practices fluctuate across the delicate inclusion–exclusion line.

This study reveals the importance which Polish families accord to their children's religious upbringing and to Catholic ritual. Having been conducted only in one area of Wales, however, it cannot claim to be representative of all Poles in Britain. Another limitation is that it only investigates the practice of Catholicism on the family level and not what Catholic faith means to either parents or children. By focusing on families with a short migration history, however, it does help to identify the critical points at which young children's socialisation into Catholicism becomes established in this unfamiliar Welsh context and provides a starting point for comparisons with Polish migrant behaviour elsewhere in Britain.


Acknowledgments

I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers and the editorial board of CEEMR for their comments on a previous version of this article.

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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<p>How to cite this article: Kaczmarek-Day A. (2018). ‘White Dress, Guests and Presents’: Polish Migrant Families’ Practice of First Communion and Negotiation of Catholic Identities in Wales. <i>Central and Eastern European Migration Review</i> 7(2): 165–183.</p>
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— RESEARCH REPORTS —

Polish Ummah? The Actions Taken by Muslim Migrants to Set up Their World in Poland

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This report discusses the ways in which Muslim communities form in Poland, with particular emphasis on the role of migrant men and women from Muslim countries, broken down into activities carried out mainly by women and mainly by men. The division of activities sometimes goes beyond the patterns of Muslim communities in other countries. The specificity of the Muslim community in Poland is related to: the historical context of the origins of its creation, i.e. the presence of Polish Tatars, a small number of Muslims living in Poland, and their diversity in terms of countries of origin.

Keywords: Muslim community; ummah; gender; Polish Muslims; Muslims on-line

Introduction

Muslim communities and their rules and ways in which they form are not only a very important and timely issue, but they are also often used in the sphere of politics. The Muslim community in Poland, albeit small, is gradually becoming the subject of an increasing number of analyses. This report highlights the activities that promote the formation of a Muslim community in Poland. The process itself is subject to some difficulties; moreover, it often deviates from the community activity patterns that Muslims are familiar with from previous experience in their home country. The report examines the activities of Muslim men and women who are migrants, although converts are often involved in Muslim communities as full-fledged and often very active members of local communities, and sometimes even leaders in the community. The report is based on the analysis of interviews and social media content. Interviews were conducted with Muslim men and women living in Poland, mostly in large Polish cities, although there were isolated cases of interviews with people living at significant distances from large cities. The respondents were part of various waves of migration, both

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from the 1970s and recent. The reasons for their migration were very diverse. Some had come to Poland because of conflicts in their countries of origin, others because of poverty, or because their spouse lived in Poland. The number of Muslims sent by corporations to work in Poland on a temporary basis is also low. The analysed content of social media comprises profiles run by official Muslim centres, e.g. local centres in large cities, and profiles and groups aimed at Muslims living in Poland. Nowadays, in the public space, much attention is devoted to the category of community. When speaking about community, we tend to emphasise its positive aspects of emotional acceptance and closeness, and the fact that it is the backbone of traditionalism.

Ummah – the concept of Muslim community

For the last dozen or so centuries, the Five Pillars and related religious observances have been the most important elements holding the Muslim community together (Toronto 2001: 47). The basis of Muslims' identity is their affiliation to the ummah, a community of Muslims, which connects all Muslims regardless of the differences that naturally occur. The specificity of Islam urges those who follow it to create a community. Islam is a social religion, not an individualistic one. It encourages people to live in a community rather than in isolation by, for example, prescribing such communal activities as Friday prayers and rituals associated with various holidays (Gaudefroy-Demombynes 1988: 415).

The emergence of Islam influenced the emergence of the idea of a community that, however, did not overcome the divisions that existed in this world and, to some extent, continue to exist today. The emergence of the concept of ummah brought about a further, significant change in the lives of Muslims; relations between individuals and the society lost their mere social meaning, gaining a moral dimension. Abandoning the community has become a more difficult choice, as it is tantamount to abandoning God (Danecki 2007: 33), this is one of the strengths of Islam as an idea that binds the faithful together. Furthermore, it must be noted that the emergence of the ummah introduced a very strict and distinct demarcation between Muslims and non-Muslims, who were different, alien, not of the chosen community. This significantly reduced the freedom of action of the individual and emphasised collective action (Danecki 2007: 34). It should also be noted that the community of followers was separated from others on many levels, e.g. economic, social, and cultural (Karamustafa 2010: 94).

The idea of group solidarity – referred to as 'asabiyyah' – emphasised by the Muslim philosopher Ibn Khaldun played an important role in understanding the Muslim community (Danecki 2007: 35; Gaudefroy-Demombynes 1988: 415). Moreover, the community dimension of Islamic identity should be considered the basis of the Muslim community (Karamustafa 2010: 94). The issue of community/ummah appears both in the Quran and the Prophet's sunnah. The Quran itself draws attention to the various forms of human association; however, it reserves a special place for religious groups. This community can also be seen in the law-making process, where consensus or communal agreement – the so-called *ijma* – is one of the foundations of the law. Naturally, the various Muslim law schools have different perspectives on this element of law, which is usually implemented based on the consensus of recognised scholars. Community identity also includes some aspects of Sharia, which makes Muslims visible, e.g. dress, Friday community prayer, fasting during Ramadan and annual pilgrimage to Mecca. These mechanisms further enhance the sense of community (Karamustafa 2010: 99).

When analysing the writings of many Muslim scholars, one can get the impression that the ummah is a real entity with widely spread, interconnected, active networks, and relatively homogeneous elements. However, researchers disagree as to whether this image corresponds with reality, both now and in the past. Some researchers argue that it is an idealised image of the Muslim world, created by the elite of the Muslim world, but in reality, such a community has never existed. The Muslim communities that do exist are local communities,

and talking about a global community is to exaggerate their nature (Karamustafa 2010: 95). The ummah is a normative/standard-setting concept used to impose common values and motives for action, regardless of social background; it is a certain idea, a certain vision of the community (Karamustafa 2010: 95). The ummah has always existed in some specific historical and socio-political context; its dominant paradigm was the product of the dominant culture created by the elite of Muslim society, and was subsequently reshaped by their successors.

In modern times, we must also take into account such new phenomena as translocal spaces, which represent sites through which a great many cultures travel (Mandaville 2004: 85). It is an important question while talking about ummah in Europe. In the case of Muslim transnationalism, a politics of authority is important because the canon of Islam is increasingly 'forced to account for and reconcile itself with any number of competing self-interpretations within translocal spaces' (Mandaville 2004: 101). As Mandaville states, the politics of identity is based not only on the presence of an external other against which communities and cultures define themselves, but also on the process of negotiation and debate taking place within a given community. In translocal spaces, difficult questions about the viability of various Islamic political discourses become more and more popular, traditional sources of authority and authenticity are fragmented and Islam, which Mandaville describes as a travelling theory, comes face to face with its own otherness (Mandaville 2004: 106). The social reality of Muslims living within non-Muslim majority societies has pushed some scholars to rethink the categories through which identity and community are represented in Islam. The creation of these communities involves new strategies; the created communities are not simply replicas of community in the societies of origin.

Differences arising from the gender role

Islam emphasises the division into gender roles of men and women. It assumes that men and women have different nature, strengths and weaknesses, and therefore it prescribes different but complementary social roles for men and women. With the assumption that all work needs doing, the division of duties and social roles according to Islamic hermeneutics is based on the principle of what role fits what gender best, and what gender is best at doing which job. Islam attributes the area of rule-making, management of the community, providing for the family etc. to men, and the provision of care and comfort in various forms to women (Haneef 1994: 111). The social roles of men and women are a reflection of roles they play in the family. Within the family structure, the man fulfils the role of the head and overseer of the family. His most important duties are to provide financial security, manage the family's relations with society and ensure family discipline. The duties of a woman exist *within* the family. Spouses are encouraged to ensure that the functions of the family are fulfilled with 'fairness and equality' (Hubsch 1997: 15). According to Muslim theology, there is an equality of rights and a principle of mutual obligations, which are in the interest of the family. However, social practice can be different. The surveyed Muslims came from different cultural backgrounds, as a result of which they displayed minor differences in perception regarding the social roles of men and women. Traditional female roles include many responsibilities that are not considered professional work. The customary division of responsibilities and the authority of men over women mean that even if certain duties would be considered work if performed by men, they are not considered as such when performed by a woman. In traditional Arab society, the obligation to maintain a family rested on the husband and he was obliged to take up paid work. Work was considered a male domain, one that women were not to be allowed to participate in, as that could have led to the breaking traditional rules and a blurring of the idea of social roles. Naturally, exceptions were allowed in specific situations. The role of midwife, doctor, or witch doctor was entrusted to women, in order to prevent women from having contact with stranger men (Hijab 1988: 95). Another argument why women should not

work was that it put them at risk of losing their virtue. This was particularly the case outside the home, where the likelihood of encountering men was much higher. This argument essentially made it impossible for young unmarried women to work. The only important argument in favour of women working was poverty. Otherwise, in order for men to preserve their own authority, and for the good of women themselves, the women ought to remain at home. Also, it was often not up to the women to decide whether they should work or not; the decision was made on their behalf by their father, brother, or husband (Saud 1993: 477; often, however, women undertook employment not fully understood as work).

In modern times, the situation of women in Muslim communities has undergone, and is still undergoing, significant change. The position of women is no longer determined primarily by the rules of Islam, but by social practices. In order to attempt to determine contexts of the social role of women in the Muslim world, it is also important to study the economic power of women and the difference between ideas on the one hand and practices on the other in Islamic societies and Muslim communities in non-Islamic countries. Islam offers some economic space for women when it comes to property and the exercise of control over it, but in practice there were times when these laws were not fully put into practice. Muslim women living in Poland come from countries where women's activity is not always accepted, but these are traditions and not religion.

Muslims in Poland

Since no statistics are available in this area, it is very difficult to determine the number of Muslims living in Poland. There are various reasons for this lack of information, primary among them being the fact that data from the Office for Foreigners classifies citizens according to country, not religion. We can therefore only estimate the number of Muslims living in Poland, and these estimates range from 11 000 to 40 000 (Jarecka-Stępień 2010; Pędziwiatr 2014; Switat 2017). Furthermore, Muslims make up a highly diverse social category. The Muslim population in Poland includes Tatars, who have existed in the country since the 17th century;¹ migrants from Muslim countries, who came to Poland in various waves of migration from the 1970s to the 1990s; and converts. Poland, like Central European countries, was never a popular immigration destination; it was isolated by the iron curtain after the Second World War, and the Polish language is considered to be extremely difficult to learn. Poland did attract the interest of immigrants – primarily students – from politically friendly countries in Asia and Africa, however, many of whom remained in Poland after graduating, marrying Polish citizens (generally women, as most of the students were male, and male students were more likely to marry and remain in Poland). These countries consisted of those which were cooperating with Poland during the time of the Polish People's Republic, as well as countries in conflict areas, namely the Middle East and Afghanistan, Pakistan, and North Africa (Switat 2017; Włoch 2009). The 1990s saw an influx of refugees, mainly from Chechnya. Since there is no effective way to collect data concerning their actual residence in Poland, it is impossible to estimate how many refugees (e.g. Muslim refugees from Chechnya) have in fact remained in Poland. Estimates from non-governmental organisations speak of several thousand protected foreigners (Wojtalik 2016). Contemporary Muslim migrants consist primarily of economic migrants and individuals who migrate for personal reasons, i.e. due to a relationship with a Polish citizen. These people come from different countries, from different Islamic factions (Shiites and Sunni) and traditions, living in accordance with different Islamic schools of law. The final category consists of the converts, who also do not form a homogeneous category. Conversion patterns varied widely, but most commonly it concerns partners who convert due to or under the influence of their spouse, often adopting the tradition and practice of Islam from the region of origin of the spouse. The second most common pattern of conversion involves conversion pursuant to the individual study of Islam; here, the subsequent choice to convert to Islam depends on other factors. Due to the small number and considerable diversity of the Muslim community in Poland, this community does not appear

in scientific discourse concerning Islam and Muslims and the borders of Poland. The Muslim community in Poland shares few similarities with communities living in the countries of the 'old' European Union, meaning that it is quite risky to apply Western findings to the Polish situation (Górak-Sosnowska 2011: 13). These issues are extremely important from the perspective of the phenomenon researched in this report, because they hinder the formation of a Muslim community in Poland, and this community is very diverse to begin with. In Western countries, since the numbers of Muslims are larger, communities are made up of Muslims who share certain similarities, such as region of origin, specific school of Islamic law or faction (e.g. Shiite or Sunni). In Poland, there are clear divisions between the Tatars and immigrants; they have established separate organisations, have different goals, are struggling against each other for leadership in the Polish Muslim community. There are two Muslim organisations that play a significant role in Poland: the Muslim Religious Association of the Republic of Poland and the Muslim League in Poland. The first organisation includes, among others, Polish Tatars. At the head of this religious organisation there is a mufti whose activity is not limited to religious issues, but also includes administrative functions. The Muslim Religious Association gathers Hanafi Sunni of Polish origin, and has the following parishes: Białystok, Bohoniki, Kruszyniany, Warsaw, Gdańsk, Bydgoszcz, Poznań, Gorzów Wlkp. (www.mzr.pl). For decades, it was the only official Muslim organisation representing the interests of all followers of Islam, both natives and immigrants representing different varieties of the religion. Despite the relatively small number of Muslims in Poland, they are divided in terms of religion and culture. Each of the local cultures of immigrants from the Maghreb, Iran, Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the Polish converts, have encountered Islam in a different way; they also understand it differently and are differently 'rooted' in that religion. For this reason, one Muslim organisation could not satisfy the needs of all Muslims in Poland (Buchta 2011). The Muslim League in the Republic of Poland was established in 2001. This organisation was created on the initiative of Muslims in Poland in response to their increasing numbers and the new needs of the Muslim community (Skowron-Nalborczyk 2005: 230). The Muslim League brings together the Muslims of different Sunni factions (including the supporters of conservative Islam) and some of the Polish converts. Its members are predominantly Arabs (from Algeria, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia), as well as Turks. Apart from these two associations, there are small minorities who also play a role in the integration and formation of the Muslim community. Another Muslim organisation in Poland is the Muslim Students Association (SSM – *Stowarzyszenie Studentów Muzułmańskich*), which has existed for more than 20 years. There are Islamic Centres, which have SSM branches, in the main cities of Poland, as well as the Muslim Association for Cultural Education in the Republic of Poland, which was officially established in 1996. The founders of this organisation previously co-created and developed the Muslim Students Association. The Muslim Unity Society (SJM – *Stowarzyszenie Jedności Muzułmańskiej*) brings together Shi'ite Muslims (Kościelniak 2015). Under the auspices of the Muslim League, Muslim centres are established in almost every major city, which organise the local life of the Muslim community; the centres are located in Warsaw, Wrocław, Katowice, Cracow, Gdańsk, Poznań, Lublin, etc.

Polish Muslims are not as socially and politically active as those who form communities in Western countries. For example, the Muslim community of Western Europe drew attention by lobbying NATO to send troops to Kosovo (Khan 2000: 32), although such actions are taken only locally and, moreover, only sporadically. The Polish Muslim community, on the other hand, is too weak to take such action. Communities that have been detached from their culture of origin need to create new identities for themselves, following which they seek social and political recognition in the host society (Khan 2000: 37). The Muslims community in Poland is faced with certain problems; according to one of the official websites, it is poorly organised. The Polish ummah does not have a leader, nor any headquarters where work can be coordinated. There is a lack of co-operation between Muslims and their respective organisations.²

Methodology

This report focuses on the actions taken by Muslim migrants towards creating their own community in Polish society. In the first stage of the study, interviews were conducted with 10 women and 10 men in the period from July 2016 to March 2017. Interviews were selected according to the principle of the snowball sampling. The effort was made to ensure that the sample would include people from different origins and different levels of education and wealth who have resided in Poland for a minimum of five years. The first respondents were recruited in Muslim centres. The respondents lived in Cracow and its vicinity, in Katowice, Kielce, Warsaw, Gdańsk, near Gorzów Wielkopolski, and in Poznań and its surroundings. The respondents were from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Bangladesh, India and Uzbekistan. Naturally, this sample is not sufficient for the study to give a full picture of the Muslim community living in Poland, but it can serve as a basis for further investigation. The study focused exclusively on Muslim migrant communities, although converts, many of whom are very active participants of the community, also play a part in shaping the Muslim community in Poland. The second stage of the study consisted of an analysis of the content of posts placed on social media profiles and groups – addressed to Muslims. It has covered all of the materials published on the studied profiles and groups until September 2017. I openly communicated about my intent and purpose in each Facebook group I joined. The profiles selected for the study were those that were the most popular in terms of the number of visits and the publication frequency of new posts. The analysis covered content published on Facebook, as there exists a significant number of groups for Muslims on this platform. Only Polish-speaking groups were taken into account – although many posts published in these groups were in English or other languages, the profiles and groups analysed were limited to those where Polish was the main language. The category of analysed profiles and groups on Facebook includes: the Women's sections of various Muslim Centres, Muslim Centres Profiles, Sis in Islam, Discover Islam, Arabs in Poland, Sympathetic Muslim Messages. The analysis of social media content comprised both posts and comments under them. In the space of the Internet it is quite difficult to distinguish between so-called funpage profiles or groups whose members consist exclusively of Muslims living in Poland. Some members are, for example, converts who live abroad. The analysis took into account only posts regarding the community in Poland. The content used in the study was information about the functioning of the Muslim community and the role that Muslim immigrants play in it. The analysis began with an examination of the role of gender in the building of Muslim communities, focusing on the activities of women.

The first important issue in the analysis is the indication – based on the conducted interviews – what community-making activities are undertaken by women and which by men. As stated before, Islam emphasises the division of men and women into gender roles – men and women have different natures, strengths and weaknesses – and, pursuant thereto, different but complementary social roles; rule-making, management of the community, providing for the family, etc. is the role of men, and providing care and comfort is the role of women. The results of this study showed that when women come to Europe, they often become more socially active; in many cases, however, they do not take up employment, meaning that their actions on behalf of the Muslim community are the only form of social activity they engage in. As a consequence, much of the activity of the Muslim community in Poland is linked to the activities of women, even if in their country of origin, some of these activities would normally be undertaken by men. The dividedness along gender lines of activities related to the functioning of the Muslim community in Poland is noticeable. Religious matters are the domain of men. It is men who become imams, men who hold most of the religious meetings, and the guests invited to those meetings – imams, interpreters, thinkers – are predominantly men. Interestingly, few of the respondents viewed imams as the leaders of the community, but rather as representatives of an institution. This is probably due to the fact that, in Poland, imams mostly act only as guides in the world of religion and spirituality, of

prohibitions and orders, while the issues involved in the organisation of community life rest on the shoulders of women. There is a clear difference, according to the respondents, between life in Poland and in their countries of origin, where leadership in the community is primarily the province of men. Some respondents noted that they or their husbands initially found it difficult to ask for help or mediation from a woman, as in many Muslim centres, it is women who provide such services. Women are responsible not only for the activities that Islam traditionally attributes to women, but for a much broader spectrum of actions. Interestingly, women also take initiatives pertaining to religious issues; in Cracow, for example, they initiated an interreligious Christian-Jewish-Muslim prayer for peace.

Muslim centres and Muslim community

First of all, it must be recognised that Muslim centres in Poland play a fundamental role in the creation of the Muslim community. The activities of the Muslim centres are based on common principles, although the specifics of the activity of a particular centre depends on the engagement of its members. The centres engage both migrants and converts. There are strong gender-based differences in these centres' activities; local centres are dominated by women, while transregional associations are dominated by men. This applies with regard to both migrant Muslims and converts.

Most of the respondents admitted that the existence of the community is important to them, and that it helps them in their lives in Poland. Cultivating customs, holidays, rituals and going through everyday life with people who understand the respondents' situation, because they are in similar situations themselves, is extremely important. Especially in these times, when prejudice against Muslims is more and more evident, according to the respondents. Examples of relevant quotes from the interviews here are 'Someone whose hijab was pulled off will more easily understand what it means when yours was pulled off' (Interview 5, woman) and 'The more the merrier' (Interview 9, man). Some of the respondents, regardless of their place of residence, said that they regretted that their centres could only integrate them into the community to a certain extent. They desired more contact with each other, but admitted that they were not personally able to establish this contact.

A matter that was often mentioned in the interviews was the organisation of social activities for the Muslim community. One of the most important of these is a congress of Polish Muslims organised by the Muslim League, which takes place every year in the second part of July. It is an opportunity to meet and get to know other Muslims from different parts of Poland, both those who live in Poland permanently and those who are there only temporarily, and both people born as Muslims and converts (Interview 3, 5, 7, all women). During the congress, thematic lectures on Islam and activities for children are held. The lectures cover various topics, mainly related to theology and the practice of Islam, and the speakers are not restricted to Polish Muslims. The congress visitors are a very diverse group, and the idea of getting to know each other is quite important. As one of the respondents states when talking about Congress and getting to know new people there: 'It is not like in the Alcoholics Anonymous group, where someone gets up and introduces themselves. Here, there are acquaintances of friends, which helps to feel a part of something bigger' (Interview 9, man). The emerging social networks are quite wide, and as many people are already acquainted, there are no activities aimed at getting to know each other. For the purpose of the convention, a holiday resort is usually rented, most often exclusively, which on the one hand preserves privacy, but on the other hand contributes to the self-isolation of Muslims in Poland. This is strengthened by the fact that, as the respondents admit, 'unfortunately the area is guarded by the police and the facility is closed' (Interview 5, woman). These conditions of isolation are, on the one hand, a necessity, as counterdemonstrations are often held during the convention, so the sense of separation and being trapped is noticeable. On the other hand, however, it 'evokes a sense of community and a sense of common destiny' in the people who have gathered at the convention (Interview 9, man). A frequent topic of

discussion at the conventions, apart from religious matters, is the social situation of Muslims living in Poland and struggling with a sense of exclusion and non-acceptance.

Both male and female respondents indicated that the activities organised by a particular Muslim institution, most often in the form of a Muslim Centre under the aegis of the Muslim League, were important to them: 'Here, I'm at home' (Interview 7, woman). The respondents described many activities that these centres undertake, which are primarily aimed at helping Muslims meet other Muslims and integrate into an unfamiliar society. An interesting initiative that helps the formation of local communities in a number of major Polish cities is the establishment of a kindergarten for children in the Muslim Centre, where Muslim children from three to six year old can spend time together once a week, allowing young children to make friends and providing an environment where children can pass the time while the adults are otherwise engaged in meetings or prayers, for example. There are spaces for children in most of the Muslim Centres as well, making these centres inviting for both adults and children. Childcare is customarily the province of women – not only in Muslim communities – and in these centres, it is indeed Muslim women who organise and act as the initiators of such activities. Occasionally, other activities for children are organised, such as arts classes. One of the activities that unites the community is also the activity aimed at the youngest Muslims. In 2017, for the first time, the Muslim League organised a Qur'an recitation competition for children aged 4 to 17, following the contests held in many places in the Muslim world. Community building also involves the joint celebration of holidays and rituals; the Muslim community organises such celebrations through the local centres. Muslim centres and communities organise *iftar*, the first meal that Muslims eat after the end of fasting in Ramadan, following a communal prayer at sunset, for Muslims from the area. The initiators and main organisers of these events are, in most cases, women. A similar situation exists with regard to the organisation of joint activities that do not directly relate to Islam, but are primarily focused on the building of relationships between members of the community. 'My favourite example: picnics' (Interview 8, woman). Such events are organised by local Muslim culture centres or Muslim organisations in a variety of cities, the goal being not only to unite people through common activities, but above all to bring Muslims and their families together. The centres often invite people or groups of people from Muslim countries who are temporarily residing in Poland; for example, the Muslim Centre in Cracow invited a group of Malaysian students. The centres primarily organise these kinds of activities, which in the Muslim community are viewed as being the province of women. It is Muslim women, especially those raised in Muslim countries, who teach converts about Islam. The surveyed Muslim women said that they often took on a mother-like role, teaching their younger friends how to live in accordance with their faith (Interview 2, 5, 7, women). Many of the female respondents stated that they found it easier to pass on their experiences regarding practical aspects of life than to enter into theological debate. In general, men do not participate in such activities. The interviewed women indicated that they felt a responsibility towards other women and the community. This aspect was much less evident in the men's responses.

Muslim Centres and associations, such as the Muslim Students Association, organise various academic events, such as lectures and meetings with Islamic academics, to familiarise people with the Islamic community's activities; these events involve not only religious authorities and Islamic academics, but also ordinary Muslims sharing their experience. Since the giving of alms is one of the most important pillars of the Islam, it also plays an important role in the Polish Muslim community, uniting everyone, from migrants to converts and Polish Tatars. The initiators of the majority of activities are women. Men take part in them either passively or as patrons and representatives; both the idea and its implementation lie with the women, who are also more inclined to cooperate beyond their own Muslim environment. According to respondents, typical activities include aiding Muslim refugees, e.g. through the 'Dzieci z dworca Brześć' campaign, or by helping unemployed Muslims find jobs, both within the Muslim community itself (through a kind of bulletin board system) and outside it.

Muslims online

The aim the content analysis carried out in the study was to show how Muslim presence on social media contributes to the formation of a Muslim community. An analysis was carried out of the most important topics of posts in various types of Facebook groups for Muslims living in Poland. Contemporary communities often take on a virtual dimension, as some of their activities are transferred into virtual space. This applies to both individual and group activities (van Dijk 2010: 57). Virtual communities can connect individuals that would otherwise be left out (Putnam 2008: 292). This is very evident in group pages formed by Muslims living in Poland. The analysis of content posted on these group pages shows that if not for these virtual spaces, it would be difficult for Muslims living in Poland to find their way in Polish society. With virtual communities, it is possible to overcome geographical and, sometimes, financial barriers to interaction between members of the Muslim community. The coexistence of the virtual and the real space of the Muslim community in Poland is evident. One can see the organisation of tasks, flow of information, and transfer of knowledge from the virtual space to reality. Comments and posts show that people who have got in touch, for example, in closed groups on Facebook, after realising that they live in the neighbouring areas, tend to meet in 'real world' and afterwards publish images or posts from the meetings. Internet space is also important for people living in isolation, e.g. at a distance from larger cities, in which case Internet is the only or most common form of contact with the Muslim community. The respondents emphasised that it was very important to them to be able to share their own problems and talk about situations which can only be understood by others who have had similar experiences. The latter does not refer to their family members who have remained in their native country and non-Muslim Polish people with whom they are in touch on a daily basis. Essentially all Muslim centres operating in the larger cities have their own Facebook profiles and strive to create local virtual communities. However, there appears to exist a lack of cooperation between these centres in the virtual sphere; there is no tagging, linking and sharing of other centres' initiatives – even, in many cases, when these other centres are listed as friends (on Facebook). This shows that the communities that are formed are strongly localised, both in reality and in the virtual space. Posts are written both in Polish and in English; members post in the language they are most fluent in, and administrators ensure that important posts are translated – primarily to English, but also e.g. French or Arabic. Groups for women have more posts, as Muslim women post more often than men; most of these posts are published by the group administrators, and users comment often on the posts. They include information about current activities organised by specific centres in specific cities, such as open days in temples or charity collections. Social media groups also function as information boards on which a variety religious information is posted, such as the prayer hours of each month, the first day of the month Dhu al-Hijjah, 'The Month of the Pilgrimage', the day of Eid al-Adha etc.; this has to do with the fact that the Muslim holiday calendar is based on the lunar calendar, meaning that the start and end of months and holidays are mobile. During holidays, such as Ramadan and Eid al-Adha, many people, especially women, would post wishes on the occasion of Eid Mubarak (Muslim holidays), and inspired people to send wishes to each other and comment on posts. Some of these posts and comments were very personal and suggested that many of the members of particular groups know each other personally.

Another issue raised in groups is the issue of the implementation of the Muslim diet in the Polish context. Posts about how to prepare halal dishes and find halal products in Poland often attract a lot of comments. Information is shared about stores and direct sellers who provide such products. Several times in the analysed groups there appeared the idea of shopping together to facilitate the fulfilment of this obligation. Such initiatives were most commonly raised by women contributing, it can be argued, to the building of a sense of a community based on struggling with similar problems. The subjects of posts are often very mundane things. For example, in the women's sections of Muslim Centres' Facebook profiles, members exchange information

on their plans for the near future, and others post comments about how busy they are and what they are going to do when they get home. Posts of this kind often attract many comments; many women are eager to share their concerns and everyday experiences. These stories connect both converts and immigrant women. Many posts consist of thoughts or simple statements, often relating to the Muslim calendar; these tend to attract many comments and are often shared on private profiles. Other frequent post topics relate to daily life, e.g. sharing favourite halal (e.g. nail polish) or discussions on burkinis, hijabs and burqas. Invitations to sports activities are occasionally posted, e.g. for a football tournament organised in the context of Football Against Racism in Europe.

Posts about oppression targeting Muslims, not only in Poland but also abroad, were very common in both men's and women's Facebook groups, attracting a lot of comments from group members. Much attention is devoted to members' fears associated with the current situation of Muslims in the world, but there is also information about meetings, accounts of them and comments on what issues were addressed at the meetings, e.g. about a meeting with a specific imam, members of organisations dealing with combating violence against others e.g. the Never Again association, etc.

Many posts relate to religious matters, especially the month of Ramadan, Ramadan preparations, and pilgrimage. Such posts are also published more frequently by the spiritual leaders of the community during the month of Ramadan. Videos with messages, prayers, etc. are also posted by religious authorities from outside the local community or outside Poland. Such posts are about how to prepare for Ramadan, what practices should be part of daily routine, or how and according to what rules to fast. There are also comments in which people explain how they personally approach certain practices, problems they encounter in fulfilling them and how they deal with those problems. This is an area where men are more active.

As the giving of alms is one of the pillars of Islam, requests for donations for a particular person, family, or initiative are often posted in social media groups. In one of the closed groups, a spontaneous collection of money and supplies was organised for one of the female members of that group who was in a difficult financial situation. This collection was a great success, not only in terms of the money and goods raised, but also in that it provided psychological and social support. People visited the woman in question at home and included her in active work for the community. Job offers or information that someone is looking for employees are also posted on pages and groups, though very rarely, and mostly on pages and in groups aimed at men.

Closed Muslim virtual world

Groups for Muslims usually segregated by gender, are closed. Oftentimes, the descriptions of the groups themselves indicate that only specific types of persons are accepted as members. Administrators ensure that no unauthorised people are accepted, using verification methods like control questions that prospective members must answer, e.g. regarding their conversion, or nomination by an existing group member. As mentioned by respondents who were creators and administrators of such groups, the need to be selective when accepting new members is growing, since non-Muslims joining the group are less and less often simply interested in Islam, but more and more often they attack Islam. As one of the respondents explained, 'we have to deal with unceasing squabbles' (Interview 12, man). As a result, Muslims tend to keep to their own environment, which on the one hand leads to greater cohesion and a deeper sense of community, but on the other hand further isolates these Muslims from the rest of society. The Internet gives Muslims, like other minorities and excluded groups, the ability to post and control content of importance for the community (Zames-Fleischer and Zames 2011: 232). Technological developments have brought an increase in interactions between individuals that are not affected by time or distance. These interactions do not supplant or substitute direct interactions, but they do complement and, in many cases, reinforce them (van Dijk 2010: 56–61). Although the bonds created through

these interactions are weaker, they allow Muslims to come out of isolation. Polish Muslims are also adept at use other channels of communication. Another way in which the Internet is being used to create a community can be seen in the formation of Internet *Radio Islam*. *Radio Islam* is still in development, but its website already hosts podcasts, through which listeners can listen to the khutbah – the Friday sermon – in two languages, Polish and English. The website also contains videos related to various topics, such as Jesus in Islam, the history of Islam, Abraham, analysis of jihad, etc.

Conclusions

The community of Polish Muslims, though small, is very diverse. It consists primarily of Muslim migrants who arrived in Poland at various times from the 1970s onwards, as well as Tatars and a small group of converts. The analysis of the activities of Muslim migrants in Poland shows that men and women are engaged in different ways. Men fulfil roles of leadership and strictly religious roles. Women organise the majority of the aspects of community life, including aspects that, in traditional Muslim communities, are the province of men. The activities of men and women also differ with regard to time spent on community work. Although women take care of the household and often work professionally, the activities they undertake in the Muslim community are intensive and time-consuming. Most of the activities carried out in the Muslim community are performed by women; men are much less involved. The activities in which men are involved tend to be less time-consuming than the activities of women.

It can be argued that the way in which the Muslims community in Poland functions is influenced by the environment; more specifically, by the environment's hostility towards Muslims. As a result, most of the activities – both real-world and in the virtual space – that men and women in the Muslim community undertake are directed inwards. These activities are often intended to unite the community, but often also lead to self-isolation; many initiatives relate to traditions from migrant Muslims' countries of origin, and are therefore exclusive to the Muslim community. Muslims are thus becoming an increasingly closed social group that has no contact with the majority of society; the social networks of certain individuals – especially those who have migrated to Poland relatively recently – consist exclusively of members of the Muslim community.

Notes


1 In the 14th century, the Tatars settled in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, mainly around Vilnius, Trakai, Grodno and Kaunas; starting from the 17th century, they also settled in the Crown, mainly in Volhynia and Podolia, as well as in the Suwałki Region of Poland in the late 17th century.

2 <http://islam-krakow.pl/eng/2014/02/17/the-muslim-community-in-poland/> (accessed: 30 November 2018).

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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How to cite this article: Stojkow M. (2018). Polish Ummah? The Actions Taken by Muslim Migrants to Set up Their World in Poland. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* 7(2): 185–196.

The Demand and Income Effect of Internal Educational Migration in Academic Centres – the Case of Opole

Diana Rokita-Poskart* 

In cities with large educational institutions, the inflow of educational migrants is important for consumption demand, and can trigger multiplier effects. The main aim of this article is to show the mechanism of the aggregate demand-income effect created by educational migration in the Polish city of Opole. An estimate of this effect is provided, based on questionnaire research among a sample of 1 075 students from all institutions of higher education located in the city. The estimated effects analysed concern the direct consumption impulse, as well as the indirect job creation and increase in income for providers of accommodation for students, in turn triggering increased consumption demand. While the results must be interpreted with care, an estimated 15 per cent of consumption demand created through expenditure of migrant students (about PLN 175 400 000) and 485 extra job show the significance of such expenditure for the local economy.

Keywords: educational migration; demand effect; income effect; the influx area

Introduction

Migration has become an important issue in the public debate, while remaining a subject of ongoing scientific research. In recent centuries, migration has played an important role in Polish history. During the Communist era, many people left the country for political reasons (Stola 2010). At the beginning of the 1990s, some former emigrants returned, causing a stimulus of investment in small and medium-sized enterprises (Jończy 2003). Poland's membership of the European Union and the opening of the labour markets of EU countries has resulted in an estimated 2.5 million Polish people living abroad (CSO 2017). This has reduced unemployment, while supporting consumption expenditure, construction of houses etc. by way of income transfers (Jończy 2010; Kaczmarczyk 2006; Solga 2013). Migration and its economic, social and demographic consequences have been widely discussed in literature on economic development (e.g., Herbst and Sobotka 2014; Jończy 2010; Okólski 2011; Solga 2014; Todaro 1997). Although it is easier (e.g. fewer bureaucratic barriers), internal

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migration follows the same logic as international migration. In the Polish context, educational migration related to higher education is a topic worth studying. When, say, 20 per cent of the population of a city consist of students, as in the city of Opole, this clearly must influence the cultural, social and demographic sphere. However, migration for educational reasons not only involves students moving to academic cities in order to live there. It also concerns the large numbers of extramural (weekend) students visiting the city during many weekends of the academic year.¹ When the share of students in the total population is large, and academic centres face an influx of students from its surrounding areas, this can have a serious impact on the local labour market, as well as the real estate market and markets for goods and services. This causes an increase in aggregate demand, and, depending on the available factors of production, can lead to multiplier effects.

This article focuses on the demand and income effect generated by internal educational migration.² The demand and income effect can occur when new consumers arrive to the city, increasing the demand for products and services as well as income in the local economy. The higher demand increases local households' incomes, and the rising incomes lead to an increase in the quantity of demand of good and services (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg 2009: 125).³ The aim of this article is to show the mechanism of the aggregate demand-income effect created by educational migration in the Polish city of Opole (approximately 120 000 inhabitants, including 25 000 students), and to provide an estimate of this effect based on questionnaire research among a sample of 1 075 students from all institutions of higher education located in the city. Based on the students' answers about expenditure and statistical data on household expenditure, the multiplier effect of these expenditures is examined.

This article is structured as follows. The first section presents a literature review concerning the impact of migration on the market of goods and services. This is followed by an elaboration with regard to the changes in the local markets for goods and services, after which the method and stages of the research are discussed. The final section presents the most important results of the research on the aggregate demand and income effect generated by educational migration in the Opole academic centre.

Before considering the results of the research, it is important to describe the situation of Opole. The city is the capital of the Opole Voivodeship (province), the smallest voivodeship in Poland in terms of population and area. Opole and the Opole voivodeship are characterized by their inter-metropolitan location and high number of residents with double citizenships (Polish and German). Opole's location between the two economically strong regions in the south-western part of Poland – the Lower Silesia Voivodeship in the west and the Silesia Voivodeship in the east – reduces its attractiveness for, broadly put, physical and human capital (Maj 2014: 137). As a consequence, effects identified for Opole may even be stronger for academic centres like Wrocław (the capital of Lower Silesia). The second characteristic – a large number of residents with double citizenship (an estimated 20–25 per cent of the population (Jończy, Rauziński and Rokita-Poskart 2014)) – is primarily the result of migration to Germany at the turn of the 21st century. As a consequence of Opole's location, the foreign migration (as well as other economically strong reasons) and the demographic situation in the area has deteriorated to the point of demographic crisis, characterised by depopulation and high variability in demographic structures (Rauziński 2012). Within this context, the inflow of students is an important issue for the urban development of Opole – all the more so because the city has one of the highest ratios of students to population in Poland.⁴

Literature review concerning the impact of migration on the receiving area

Internal educational migration is a process of influx of students into academic centres, which can be treated in a similar way as immigration. As the available literature on the impact of internal educational migration is limited, the theoretical background in this article relies on more general studies into international migration.

In the context of a declining and ageing population, immigration is an important factor in dealing with labour market shortages, as it affects the size, spatial distribution, age and gender structure of the population of the inflow area (Potrykowska and Śleszyński 1999: 15). Migration to a region results in a reduction of the average age of the population, as the vast majority of migrants are younger than the host population (Marchwica 2011: 8; Münch and Hoch 2013: 3; Okólski 2013: 21; Rakowska and Rakowski 2009: 365–367; Siddiq, Baroni, Lye and Nethercote 2010: 47–50; Thorsby 1998: 9).

In addition to its demographic impacts, migration affects the economy in different ways. This article focuses on local commodity and service markets and the labour market, as these are elementary in an initial assessment of the multiplier effects of migration. As migration increases the size of the population, this is likely to increase consumption demand and demand for housing, which in turn may lead to an increased demand for labour. When migration is permanent, labour supply increases, which reduces shortages (or increases excess supply) on the labour market (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg 2009: 296; Gordon 2007: 40; Saiz 2003: 19; Saiz 2007; Siddiq, Halterman, Nethercote, Sinclair and White 2009: 41). Many studies into the impact of migration on the labour market of the inflow area focus on the impact on labour supply from a macroeconomic perspective (Borjas 2004; Camarota 1997; Dustmann, Fabbri and Preston 2005; Gross 2002; Hsieh and Kohler 2007; Jean and Jimenez 2007; Kustec 2012; Nickell and Saleheen 2009). Less attention is paid to the mesoeconomic impact of migration on the local labour market (Jøensen 2007; Scott-Clayton 2012). The available literature with a mesoeconomic perspective examines the impact of influx of people on the size of local labour supply as well as unemployment rates (Galloway and Jozefowicz 2008), changes in remuneration levels (Boustan, Fishback and Canton 2010; Card 2005) and the impact on labour shortages in certain sectors (Akbar 2015; Kaczmarczyk, Stefańska and Tyrowicz 2008; Kubiciel-Lodzinska 2012). The lowest amount of attention is devoted to the impact of migration on the local demand for work. This mechanism relates to the influx of people who, through the increase in local consumer demand, can trigger an increase in the demand for labour and lead to the creation of jobs in the local economy (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg 2009; Constant 2014; Somerville and Sumption 2009).

Similar processes can be expected to occur where internal educational migration is concerned. The arrival of university students can be treated as an additional influx of people, increasing the number of consumers and creating a specific type of consumer demand. This mechanism has been discussed by the authors of Economic Impact Studies (Eesley and Miller 2012; Fletcher and Morakabati 2013; Fowler and Fuller 2005; Ruggs, Rhodes and Jones 2000; Russo, van den Berg and Lavanga 2003; Steinacker 2005). It must be mentioned that the migration of students to academic cities does not only have positive consequences. An example is the so-called studentification of cities, which can be defined as socio-economic, cultural and physical transformations that occur with the influx of students into academic centres (Kotus, Rzeszewski and Bajerski 2015). When large numbers of students take up permanent residence in a city, this can be expected to cause an increase in property prices and a restructuring of the available housing as a result of relocation of permanent residents from areas with increasing student populations to other parts of the city. Moreover, in places where students are concentrated, a large concentration of shops and pubs supplying student-oriented goods and services has been observed (Anderson 2013; Hatch, Marcotte, Posik, Stewart III, Thibodeau and Glove 2015; The Independent 2004).

The effect of internal educational migration on the inflow area: equilibrium models

The impact of the influx of students on the economy of an academic city is multidirectional. However, the analyses in this article focus on the theoretical aspects of the economic impact of the influx on the local market for goods and services. This issue is ‘virtually untouched in the literature’ (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg

2009: 125). The mechanism can be explained using the standard model of a commodity and service market. The initial market situation can be compared to a small economy where prices are set by interactions between demand and supply (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg 2009: 123; Jończy 2003). This model refers to a 'typical' basket of goods and services consumed by an average student. The basket consists of food, clothing, housing services, gastronomy services, entertainment and recreation services, and hairdressing and beauty services.⁵

When educational migration occurs, some important changes on the local market of goods and services can be observed. Firstly, the influx of new consumers stimulates local demand, as the arrival of students in the city temporarily increases the number of consumers. Secondly, educational migration can also have an impact on the supply on local labour market. Students finding employment contribute to the increase in the supplied quantity of different goods and services demanded by the incoming students.

The mechanism described can be compared to one of the elements of the Rybczynski Theorem, which assumes that the inflow of one factor of endowment, in this case labour, leads to an increase in production of the good that uses this factor intensively (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg 2009: 123). Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the increase in supply cannot be equally applied to all products and services available in the local economy, but primarily to those in whose production or consumption migrants are involved. The increase in supply is expected to be observed almost exclusively in the production of goods and services in the university students' consumer basket. An explanation is that students are mostly involved in low-skilled work, mainly in the trade and service sectors,⁶ and the increase in consumption demand is directed at goods and services typically bought by students.

The increased consumption demand from students is likely to lead to an increase in employment, not only of students, but also of non-student residents. The newly employed will see an increase in their income. When this additional income is spent on locally produced goods and services, the volume of consumer demand increases once more. This first step in the multiplier effect is likely to increase production and local income, as prices are unlikely to increase. While this fundamentally depends on the availability of unused factors of production, the Rybczynski Theorem implies that with an influx of student labour, production possibilities increase. This may eventually lead to lower production costs, reducing or eliminating pressure on prices to change, even if a strong increase in local demand is observed.

In reality, the changes on the goods and services market in Opole and other academic centres will undoubtedly differ slightly from the changes presented above. First of all, it is unlikely that there existed, in reality, an initial local market equilibrium. In addition, it is questionable whether supply and demand curves will shift equally. Furthermore, the slope of the demand and supply curves provide analytical challenges, especially with regard to student housing. Supply on the real estate market tends to be very inelastic in the short run. The slopes of the demand and supply curves depend on many factors. As a consequence of the influx of educational migrants, an increase in demand can be observed in the local market for goods and services, as well as an increase in the number of employees, which in turn leads to an increase in supply, changing the market equilibrium. This effect is not taken into consideration. Finally, it should be noted that with regard to the analysis of the economic consequences of migration for the goods and services market, there are still 'big missing pieces to the theoretical puzzle' (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg 2013: 132).

Method of research and estimates

The calculation the effects generated by educational migration for the local economy of Opole was based on the results of quantitative research conducted in the period 2013–2015. A survey using paper questionnaires of 23 questions was carried out among students from selected field of study at all universities located in Opole.

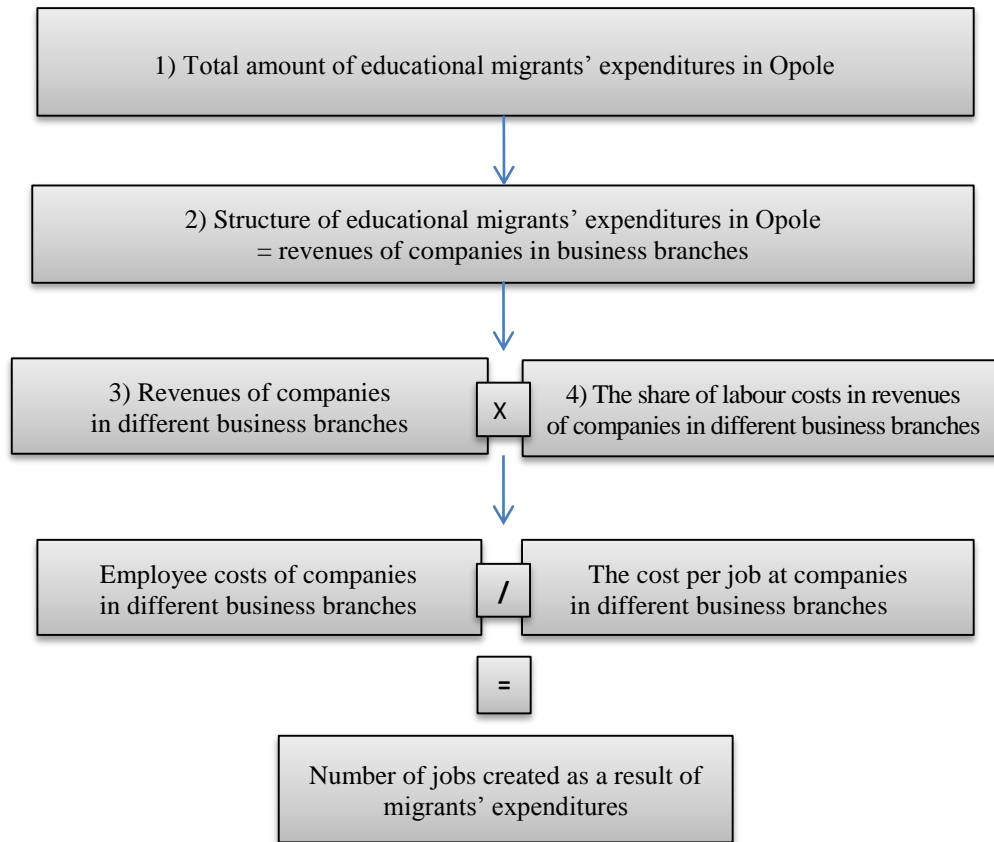
The first step in the research process was to select the fields of study according to the framework of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) for the Opole academic centre.⁷ The next step was to conduct research among students in the selected areas of study. The data were gathered at moments when the class attendance was relatively high and the students' presence had been verified by the lecturers. All students were asked to complete a paper questionnaire. A total of 1 400 questionnaires were collected. Subsequently, 1 075 properly completed questionnaires were selected in such a way as to adjust the sample structure for the studied population (according to the Central Statistical Office data for Opole city) with regard to gender and areas of study. Consequently, the characteristics of the sample of researched students corresponded very closely to the characteristics of the Opole city population. It consisted of 61 per cent women and 39 per cent men; 65 per cent were full-time students, 35 per cent part-time students. According to the study results, migrants account for around 90 per cent⁸ of all young people studying in Opole. Of these 61 per cent were women and 39 per cent were men. The majority were studying full-time (64 per cent), and 36 per cent were part-time students. Migrants include both persons residing temporarily in Opole during their studies and persons commuting to the academic city from their place of residence. According to the study results, three sub-groups could be distinguished: commuters (47.6 per cent), tenants renting flats and rooms in Opole (36.4 per cent) and students living in dormitories (16 per cent). In the further analysis, only the group of students classified as migrants was taken into consideration: 967 cases.

The demand and income effects on the market for goods and services were determined as follows (Rokita-Poskart 2016b). First, a question was asked about the average monthly expenses in Opole, including expenditure for accommodation, food and soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, clothing and cosmetics, as well as entertainment and other services. This allowed the estimation of the total demand effect generated by total migrant spending.

Next, based on Wiedermann's (2008) concept of multiplier effects, the total number of new jobs created was estimated (Diagram 1). Following Wiedermann's concept, it was assumed that the main share of consumption expenditure contributes to increased sales and revenues for enterprises, and increases the demand for labour (see points 2 and 3 in Diagram 1). This assumption was confirmed by the questionnaire outcomes. However, this assumption has its limitations. Firstly, even when only expenditures that seem to become revenue for enterprises are taken into consideration, classifying these revenues remains a subjective issue. Secondly, respondents may not indicate the exact amount of expenditure in the city where they study.

Subsequently, labour costs as a percentage of enterprise revenues were estimated based on statistical data (CSO 2015b). The result was multiplied by the enterprises' revenue generated by migrant expenditures. The next step was to divide the results of the previous calculation by the unit cost of labour in given branches (CSO 2013). In this manner, the number of jobs created by the expenditures of the educational migrants in the Opole academic centre was estimated (Rokita-Poskart 2016a, b).

The next step was to estimate the additional income for two groups of beneficiaries of migrant expenditure: persons finding new employment and households providing rental services for students. The incomes for the first group were estimated using data from the Central Statistical Office about levels of remuneration in different branches of the national economy for the Opole Voivodeship. For the second group, total income was estimated based on the average expenditure on private accommodation by the migrants who declared to rent accommodations in Opole. The last step was the calculation of demand reported by the newly employed, who have gained income due to student expenditure, as well as the households gaining income by providing rental services for students. This estimation is based on data from the Central Statistical Office about the share of consumption expenditure in the disposable income of an average household member in the Opole Voivodeship (CSO 2015a). These steps enabled estimation of the increase in demand resulting from the consumption expenditure of educational migrants.

Diagram 1. Calculation concept for multiplier effect

Source: own elaboration based on Wiedermann (2008).

Some difficulties and simplifications are associated with the model applied in this paper (Domański and Gwosdz 2010). In accordance with the assumptions of the Keynesian multiplier model, it is assumed that the prices of goods and services in the local economy are fixed (or very sticky). Even if prices were assumed to be flexible, this would be very difficult to measure. One reason for this is that the influx of migrant students may result in two opposing effects. An increase in consumption demand may lead to an increase in price level when factors of production become increasingly scarce. On the other hand, the increase in labour supply may reduce the cost of labour, reducing the pressure on prices. Furthermore, it is assumed that there is no migration outflow from the area. In reality, an outflow of migrants has been observed in Opole (Jończy 2010, 2017), which reduces consumer demand and the available labour resources. Finally, a simplifying assumption is that all consumption demand from migrant students is satisfied within the city of Opole, and not outside the city.

Research data and outcomes

The transmission mechanism from the moment of a migrant student's arrival to the city through the redistribution of their income on the local market is associated with an immediate demand impulse. The research results showed that about 90 per cent of the sample consisted of migrants. Therefore, to calculate the total impact, it was assumed that 90 per cent of the total Opole student population (22 500 out of 25 000, using 2015 as a base year (Local Data Bank n.d.)) are migrants. The average expenditure per student was a reported PLN 705 per month. As the academic year lasts nine months, this creates an additional customer demand of more than PLN 142 000 000. According to the research, the largest share of expenditure concerns food, chemicals

and clothing (more than PLN 61 000 000). Other expenses include flat rent (PLN 29 000 000), payment for student dormitories (more than PLN 12 000 000), entertainment and recreation (about PLN 11 000 000), transport (more than PLN 10 000 000), gastronomic services (more than PLN 8 500 000), and expenditure on other goods and services.

While analysing the impact of migrant expenses on the local enterprises, attention should be paid to the effect of additional labour demand, especially in locations near student campuses as well as in the inner city, due to the higher revenue of local enterprises generated by the demand from migrants. This effect was estimated based on the Wiedermann approach, using the discussed student expenditure, statistical data about the relation of labour cost to total enterprise revenues (CSO 2015b), and the monthly cost per employee per month (CSO 2013). These data are presented in Table 1. Based on these data, it was estimated that 485 additional jobs were created in the first step of the consumption demand impulse given by educational migrants. The greatest share of employment was created in retail trade (about 250) and gastronomy (about 180).

The 485 jobs created trigger multiplier effects. Based on statistical data about the level of remuneration in various sectors of the local economy (see columns C and D in Table 1; CSO 2013), it was estimated that an extra net annual net income of ca. PLN 11 000 000 has been created.⁹ Furthermore, it was estimated that the annual net income of the second group of beneficiaries of the consumption demand impulse, the providers of rental services for educational migrants, was increased by PLN 29 000 000.¹⁰ The extra demand created by this additional income is lower than this total of PLN 40 000 000. When assuming, using data from a survey of Polish households' budgets, that 84.3 per cent of income is spent (and 15.7 per cent saved (CSO 2015a)), the extra expenditure is PLN 33 400 000. Therefore, the total demand effect in the first two stages of the multiplier effect is ca. PLN 175 400 000 annually (PLN 142 000 000 consumption expenditure by educational migrants plus PLN 33 400 000 expenditure by the beneficiaries of these migrant expenditures). The total increase in consumption demand is about 15 per cent of the total consumption demand generated by inhabitants from Opole.¹¹

Table 1. Estimation of the number of new jobs created as a result of educational migrants' expenditures in Opole

	A	B	C	D
	Estimated revenue of local companies deriving from expenditure made by educational migrants in Opole	The proportion of labour costs to revenue of enterprises (based on CSO 2015b)	Monthly labour cost per employee (based on CSO 2013)	Number of new jobs created as a result of educational migrants' expenditures in Opole ((A*B)/C)
Trading enterprises	PLN 7 991 294	8.0%	2 550.12	251
Gastronomic enterprises	PLN 1 869 134	22.0%	2 330.39	176
Enterprises providing services related to sports, arts and recreation	PLN 433 357	25.0%	4 908.38	22
Enterprises providing transportation	PLN 280 623	13.0%	3 232.80	16
Enterprises providing photocopying services	PLN 285 746	15.1%	4 391.31	10
Other service enterprises	PLN 404 993	9.0%	2 612.64	10
Total number of created jobs				485

Source: Rokita-Poskart (2016b), own calculation based on empirical research and data provided by the Central Statistical Office (CSO 2013, 2015b).

As long as the multiplier effect continues to play out within the city of Opole – i.e. the additional profit generated in each step in the chain of income and demand is spent locally, not in other cities – the economic importance of educational migrants increases with each subsequent steps. However, the multiplier effect may be reduced due to the fact that migrant students are part of the 485 extra jobs created. This extra income is in fact the basis for their consumption expenditure calculated in the first step. On the other hand, no data are available about the extra income for entrepreneurs generated by the extra revenue caused by the initial consumption impulse. An issue for which the calculation of the multiplier effects does not provide evidence is the impact of educational migrants on the survival of local companies, and the increasing resilience of the local economy due to the strengthening of relations with other companies in local supply chains.

Concluding remarks

In cities with large educational institutions, educational migrants may create significant demand effects as well as indirect multiplier effects. In this article, the importance of this mechanism was shown. In the city of Opole, the capital of the Opole Voivodeship in Poland, the total effect of initial consumption demand and indirect effects increase through the employment created and increased income of providers of rental services was an estimated PLN 175 400 000. This is about 15 per cent of the total consumption demand in the city. Although this estimate should be treated with caution, it is a practical example of the importance of the multiplier effect of student migrants in academic centres.

In the specific case of Opole, the student inflow is of particular importance for the local economy. While the described effects appear in all large academic centres, in the case of intermetropolitan cities like Opole, the presence of students and the redistribution of their income is especially highly desirable as a main source of economic and demographic development (Platje, Poskart and Rokita-Poskart 2016). This is an issue which may require deeper research: to what extent does a large student population and educational migration stabilize an urban economy, or create threats should the student numbers stagnate?

Notes

¹ The term ‘educational migration’ refers to the population movements related to higher education. The author defines the category of educational migration as both the movement of population associated with temporary change of residence during the study, as well as persons commuting from their place of residence to the academic city. More about terminology and definitional issues in Rokita-Poskart (2016b: 207–208).

² The analysis presented in the paper omits the international students. This is for two reasons; first, the proportion of international students in Opole in relation to the total number of students is quite low. Second, the intention was to focus only on internal educational migration.

³ The terms: the income effect and indirect multiplier are used interchangeably (Micek 2011).

⁴ Opole has one of the highest student-to-population ratios among all capitals of voivodeships in Poland, and the highest one among all non-metropolitan capitals (own calculations based on Local Data Bank n.d.).

⁵ The presented basket of goods and services of the average student of Opole was constructed based on empirical research conducted in Opole (Rokita-Poskart 2016b).

⁶ The results of the conducted research show that educational migrants mainly work in trade and service enterprises. Their work therefore is likely to mostly affect the volume of service supply in the local market.

⁷ The sample consisted of 66 per cent bachelor students and 34 per cent master students.

⁸ With small deviations (about 2–3 per cent) the result coincides with the information about the share of educational migrants from the two largest public universities located in Opole. According to these data, the

share of educational migrants among the total number of students enrolled in these higher institutions was about 87–88 per cent.

⁹ This estimation was calculated for the academic year, using the data from Table 1. The monthly net income (column C minus the labour costs) was multiplied by the extra jobs created in each branch that was taken into consideration (column D). The monthly net wage was estimated based on data from table 1, column C, assuming that the average net income amounts to 74 per cent of gross income.


¹⁰ See the structure of migrant expenditures at the beginning of the section.

¹¹ These calculations were made by comparing the value of the income and demand effect, estimated at approximately PLN 175 400 000, and the estimated PLN 1.2 billion demand reported by the residents of the city of Opole. The demand of the Opole residents was calculated by multiplying the monthly level of spending of an average household member in the Opole Voivodeship (PLN 1 102.99) by 9 months (the length of the academic year), and then multiplying this by the total population of Opole (CSO 2015; Local Data Bank n.d.).

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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How to cite this article: Rokita-Poskart D. (2018). The Demand and Income Effect of Internal Educational Migration in Academic Centres – the Case of Opole. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* 7(2): 197–208.

International Students at the Medical University of Łódź: Adaptation Challenges and Culture Shock Experienced in a Foreign Country

Paweł Przyłęcki* 

The paper addresses the issue of culture shock and the challenges met in the process of adaptation to a new culture, as experienced by international students studying in Poland. Until recently, Poland has not been regarded as a very attractive educational market. Poland joining the EU in 2004 contributed to a surge in various types of migrant arriving in the country, including international students. However, for the last few years the number of young people coming to Poland in order to study has been growing steadily. Yet, this growth does not mean that state, local or university authorities have any knowledge of how to resolve possible future conflicts which might and often do arise between overseas students and the society which receives them, or of how to help these students with their everyday problems. This dilemma is the result of a lack of studies regarding this group. Previous studies regarding migrants in Poland were only slightly focused on international students. In spite of the fact that international students are migrants, they differ significantly from other types of migrant – mostly those who are in Poland for economic or political reasons. The aim of the research presented in this article was therefore to carry out an initial exploration of the problems which this group encounters both at university and in society. The research was carried out in two stages with medical students in Łódź. The first stage was a paper-based questionnaire completed by international students studying at the Medical University of Łódź (N=74). The second stage involved three focus-group interviews conducted with some of these students.

Keywords: Medical University of Łódź; international students; culture shock; adaptation; racism

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Introduction

Discussions in the literature on the causes and nature of current migrations have been ongoing for many years and result in different theories explaining this process. Referring to theories focusing on transnationalism and transnational communities, it is clear that, at present, there is an increase in cyclical mobility and temporary migration – the result of the rapid expansion of transport and communication (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014). One example of such migrations is the multi-faceted movement of people travelling from one country to another for different reasons. To this group of travellers international students also belong. Thus these new forms of migration somewhat contradict former images of a migrant as someone who usually left his or her own country in order to start living in another because life in the home country was impossible or very difficult – the push factor – and/or because another country offered much better possibilities for development and an improved standard of living – the pull factor (Lee 1966).

In the past, overseas students were usually the type of migrant preferred by the state authorities due to their non-problematic character. Such students do not usually negate the model of the dominant culture, do not enter into conflicts with the receiving society, do not benefit from the social system but contribute to economic growth, are temporary migrants who usually return to their own countries after finishing their studies and, if they do decide to stay, act as added value for the host country. However, the primary assumption that more-developed Western countries help underdeveloped countries in their economic and social development through educating their students is no longer relevant. Many third-country students prefer to stay in the country where they studied. Over time, it became a real concern for some countries – such as, for example, the UK – due to the large numbers of incoming students. The massive surge of students from third countries also does not necessarily mean that they are always those who, as was assumed earlier, would be able to form a high-skilled elite in a new country. On the contrary, as Luthra and Platt (2016) established, many of the third-country students studying in the UK only have a small elite component – they are mostly students with more ‘middling’ than elite potential.

This problem, however, does not seem to concern Poland at present due to the fact that the number of overseas students studying there is still not very significant. However, it is possible to notice certain positive facets of the presence of overseas students in Poland as they have a significant meaning for the academic environment, especially in the context of falling domestic demand for higher-level studies – to a great extent the result of demographic decline. The growth in the number of international students should also be interpreted in economic terms, due to the profits – discernible by local businesses – to be made from providing services to this group.

The main aim of this paper is to present our findings about the process of sociocultural adaptation of overseas students studying in Poland. We base this on the example of students at the Medical University of Łódź (henceforth MUL), with special emphasis given to the difficulties they encounter in their everyday contacts with Polish society. Referring to Adrian Furnham and Lora Tresize (1983, cited in Furnham 2002: 14), three types of problem encountered by international students can be distinguished related to:

- living in a foreign culture (racial discrimination, language problems, difficulties with adaptation, loneliness, stress resulting from limited financial means, dietary differences and separation from the family);
- growing up, reaching early maturity and accompanying it with the development of emotional and intellectual independence;
- managing at university (e.g. a different system of education).

The themes of the research carried out with international students at the MUL were issues related to living and managing in a foreign culture and at university. In this respect the following research questions are being addressed:

- What hinders international students' study at the Medical University of Łódź?
- What hinders international students' adaptation to life in Polish society?
- How are international students treated by members of the receiving culture?
- How do international students adapt to this new culture?

This paper outlines the key arguments regarding the experience of culture shock and the adaptation difficulties which international students in Poland face. First, the theoretical framework and methodological approach are presented. Then, on the basis of the research conducted with international students studying at the MUL, the adaptation challenges they experience are discussed.

Conceptualising international students as migrants

The literature distinguishes the different ways of categorising migrants, depending on a number of factors – length of stay away from the home country (migrants, sojourners, tourists), how far, in distance, they migrate, motives for leaving (education, business, resettlement) and the nature of the relationships between migrants and the dominant culture (friendly, antagonistic, etc.). Students are thus put into the category of sojourners – i.e. people who temporarily stay in a new place for between six months and five years and for whom the purpose of their stay is defined and related to performing particular tasks. Sojourners usually leave their country with the intention of returning while, at the same time, hoping to adjust well to the new culture (Furnham 2012). Students are categorised into the same group of travellers as diplomats, expatriate business people, army staff, volunteers and people working for charities or as missionaries.

Globally, studying abroad had become very fashionable by the end of the twentieth century. Currently, in accordance with OECD (2013) data, more than 4 000 000 students in the world study abroad, the majority of them in countries like the USA, Great Britain, France, Australia and Germany. Poland has not thus far been regarded as a very attractive place to study. In 1982, some 3 200 overseas students studied in Poland; by 1990 the number had risen to 7 080 (Łodziński 1993). The students came mainly from the socialist block and third-world countries. However, the last few years have brought about a significant change in this respect and a considerable increase in the number of students. In 2015, the number of international students who started their education at Polish universities was 57 119 people (CSO 2017). The increase should be considered as positive proof that Polish universities are becoming more and more open to people from outside the country. Simultaneously, the increase in the number of international students will have an impact on the development of the educational market in Poland as well as on the national and local economies. Moreover, if the growing tendency remains at the same level, it may result in the elimination of the negative effects of demographic decline. Due to the fact that diplomas obtained at Polish universities are now recognised in many countries and that studying in Poland is much cheaper than in Western Europe, Polish universities have an opportunity, as has been the case for many years in a number of EU countries, to encourage international students to come to study in Poland.

In Poland the greatest number of students is from Ukraine (30 589 students in 2015), followed by Belarusians (4 615 students). Other students come from virtually all over the world (CSO 2017).

Perspectives on culture shock

Since the second half of the twentieth century, extensive research on culture shock has been carried out. The notion of culture shock, introduced into the scientific literature by anthropologist Kalervo Oberg (1960), began to be used to describe an individual's process of inner adjustment to the unknown environment and how this adjustment affected the individual in emotional, cognitive, psychological, behavioural or physiological ways (Pedersen 1995). Most scholars (*inter alia* Ferraro 1990; Kohls 1984) differentiate four primary phases of culture shock experienced by everyone in many ways: the honeymoon phase, the crisis or cultural shock phase, the adjustment phase and the adaptation phase. The honeymoon phase is characteristic of the first weeks or months of a person's stay abroad. This period is usually accompanied by positive feelings, enthusiasm or even fascination with the new culture. The crisis phase starts when individuals begin to negatively perceive some aspects of their new surroundings such as the social or legal rules. The adjustment phase starts when the individual realises that some change towards the host country and society is needed, otherwise he or she may well end up suffering from depression. A variety of adjustments can be made – flight or isolation, for example (Winkelman 1994). The last stage is adaptation, when the foreigner realises that he/she should accept the customs of the host country as a different way of living (Oberg 1960). However, as Oberg (1960) claims, adaptation is not always the case. Not everyone goes through all phases of culture shock. The individual can stop at the second phase – the crisis or shock phase. In this situation, if the person has no choice but to remain in the new country for a longer period, serious depression may set in.

Due to criticism of its too-broad interpretation and the simultaneous difficulties connected with its research – it is not amenable to empirical testing (Ward, Bochner and Furnham 2005) – the notion of culture shock, over time, began to be replaced with more precise terms like 'adaptation' or 'acculturation' (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping and Todman 2008), the aim of which was to explain the culture shock experienced by newcomers to a culture.

In research on culture shock, two perspectives grew in importance. Initially, the prevailing perspective was the one which identified culture shock with mental illness. Researchers who associated the subdued mood of migrants with illness of a mental nature highlighted certain factors predisposing a person to it – the individual characteristics of a person, mourning, a sense of fatalism, unfulfilled expectations related to the improvement in someone's living conditions or a lack of social support (Zhou *et al.* 2008). In the 1980s, researchers started to step away from clinically biased theory and move towards research on the social and psychological aspects of adaptation (Ward *et al.* 2005). Thereby, the theory of learning a culture grew in importance (Zhou *et al.* 2008). The pioneer of this approach is considered to be Peter Adler (1975), according to whom positive elements of culture shock should be identified – such as learning and gaining knowledge and intercultural experience – which influence the development of cultural maturity in a migrant (Simpson 2014). From this perspective, three major approaches to examining culture shock were developed, which can be described as ABC – Affect, Behaviour, Cognition (Zhou *et al.* 2008). The first approach refers to the theories of stress and ways of coping with acculturation difficulties – they present contact with a foreign culture as one of the forms of psychological stress. The second approach refers to theories of learning a culture which emphasise the behavioural aspects of intercultural contact. The third approach refers to theories focusing on the change of identity of those who live in a foreign culture for a lengthy period of time (Boski 2009).

Below, three approaches to adapting to life in a new cultural milieu will be outlined, with special emphasis on the perspective of culture learning and social identity, due to the fact that they influence my further deliberations concerning foreign students studying in Łódź.

Stress and coping

A 'stress and coping' approach emphasises the role of life changes in the process of cross-cultural transition, the appraisal of the changes and the use of coping strategies to get through them (Ward 2001). The framework is broad and involves both the features of the individual and the characteristics of the situation, both of which have an impact on a person's adjustment to a new culture. The factors affecting cultural adjustment involve life changes, personality factors (locus of control, extraversion, tolerance of ambiguity), cognitive appraisals, coping styles, social support, loneliness, homesickness, marital satisfaction and the quality of contacts with both home and host nationals. The success or failure of the adaptation may be the result of both personal and societal variables. The host society's attitude towards minority ethnic groups can exert a significant influence on stress and coping strategies (Ward *et al.* 2005).

Culture learning

The 'culture learning' approach has been influenced by social and experimental psychology, primarily by Argye's work (1969) regarding social interaction. However, this perspective was strongly promoted by Adrian Furnham and Stephen Bochner (1986). The approach puts the emphasis on the necessity of learning about a host culture in order to attain the knowledge and skills needed to communicate effectively in a new intercultural milieu. Protagonists of this theoretical approach argue that the primary reason why migrants, including overseas students, experience adaptation difficulties is their lack of knowledge about social institutions and social structures like norms, strategies of conflict resolution, etc. Ignorance of the host culture puts obstacles in the way of forming relationships with native students. In addition, a newcomer's insufficient knowledge of the host-country language and his or her social deficits will make social contacts very difficult (Ward 2001).

Shock is understood here as a stimulus to the acquisition of the specific cultural skills which are required for interaction in new situations. According to this approach, the process of adaptation is influenced by different factors, among which are the knowledge of the host culture that an individual possesses, his or her length of stay in the new intercultural milieu, language and cultural competence, number and quality of contacts with the members of the host culture, previous experience of living in a foreign country, friendships made and culture disparity (Zhou *et al.* 2008). The culture-learning approach is concerned with the processes by which sojourners learn new skills that are relevant in the new milieu (Ward 2001).

Proponents of the culture-learning approach believe that social skills as well as training and contacts with host-society members are all relevant to newcomers. Sojourners need to learn the salient traits of the new culture from host-society members. Adaptation to a new culture means, however, not only learning the language but, initially, understanding the norms, rules and customs which are binding in a given culture. Knowledge of the above allows newcomers to understand different forms of behaviour in the host society and simultaneously to avoid mistakes concerning non-verbal communication like gestures, looking at people, proxemics postures, greetings or facial expressions of emotion (Ward 2001).

Bochner, McLeod and Lin (1977) emphasised the importance of intercultural friendships in gaining the new social skills needed to live in a new culture. Ward *et al.* (2005) stated that student friendships are usually of a threefold nature – a mono-cultural network of sojourning compatriots, a bicultural network of both sojourners and hosts and a network of multicultural friends and acquaintances. Students who have extensive and good contacts with members of the host society usually cope much better with problems of socio-cultural adaptation; on the other hand, those who limit their contacts to those with their compatriots experience more problems of a socio-cultural nature.

The culture-learning approach also emphasises the role of cultural and ethnic similarity between groups and individuals making contact with each other. People coming from the same cultural, language or religious environment understand better and learn faster the rules of the host culture. On the other hand, host nationals are usually more open towards people who are like them. Big cultural differences between interacting groups also hinder this mutual interaction and adaptation to the host culture.

As stated, people who come from cultures of disparate values may have the greatest difficulty in adapting (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 2010). Two dimensions of culture seem to be especially meaningful in the process of adaptation – individualism–collectivism and power distance. Individualistic cultures lay the emphasis on the individual, his or her independence and the role that he or she plays in the organisation of society, whereas collectivist cultures assign a bigger role to people as a group. People brought up in an individualistic culture value their own independence. They are characterised by the need to differentiate themselves from others in their contacts with people, they clearly state their needs and are prone to express, even in public, their criticism of the opinions of others. People brought up in a collectivist culture act in a completely opposite manner to individualists and tend to fit in with others. They are not inclined to express their opinions, especially towards somebody who has a higher rank in society. Power distance, however, describes how people coming from a given culture perceive the relations between people in managerial positions and their subordinates (Hofstede *et al.* 2010). In societies of high power distance, a strong hierarchical division exists between those who hold power and those who are subordinate to them whereas, in societies of low power distance, relations of a horizontal nature dominate.

On the whole, the culture-learning approach highlights the role of social skills and social interactions, both of which are of great importance in any successful adaptation process to a new cultural milieu. Sojourners coming from culturally distant countries experience more adaptation problems due to their lack of knowledge about the salient facets of the new culture. However, as Ward, Okura, Kennedy and Kojima (1998) emphasise, a willingness to learn about a new culture has a positive influence on socio-cultural adaptation.

In fact, socio-cultural adaptation is a learning curve – research on foreign students has shown that socio-cultural adaptation increases significantly between the first and the sixth month of settlement and then increases only marginally in the second six months of the first year of residence (Ward 2001; Ward *et al.* 1998).

Social identification theories

Social identification theories concentrate on the cognitive aspects of the adaptation process and concern the changes which take place in an individual's identity. Newcomers to a culture experience many new phenomena. Everything that takes place around a given individual – contacts with in-groups and out-groups, the individual's own opinion of the host society as well as the attitude of the host towards the society of the sojourners and the openness to contacts with others, etc. all influence the individual's self-perception and the perception of his/her identity. As Zhou *et al.* (2008) posit, in social identification two conceptual approaches are usually applied – acculturation and social identity theory.

Acculturation means the changes which occur in people and groups experiencing intercultural contacts. They concern both sojourners and members of the host culture (Ward 2001). The following models describing the changes which occur in a person's identity can be distinguished. The first is the uni-dimensional model describing the behaviours of migrants who renounce identification with the culture of their origin and adopt the features and values represented by the new culture. The second model, two-dimensional, describes the behaviours of travellers who try to balance the influences of both cultures – i.e. what influences the shaping of a person's social identity are the cultures of both origin and contact. The third model, known as categorical, is a more sophisticated model (Ward 2001; Zhou *et al.* 2008). John Berry (2005, 2009) contributed significantly

to the development of the model, contending that the acculturation process involves at least two groups in contact and occurs at the cultural and the psychological level. One of the groups are migrants and the second host-country nationals, because all groups in contact experience some changes. On the cultural level of exploration, it is essential to identify the characteristics of the two groups before the contact between them is established – both groups have their own cultural and psychological qualities. The compatibility or incompatibility in values, attitudes or religion between the groups in contact may have a significant impact on the result of the acculturation process. On the psychological level, the changes that the individuals undergo in all groups – ways of eating, dressing or producing acculturative stress, etc. – need to be identified (Berry 2009).

Researching individuals and groups who acculturate, Berry (1997, 2001, 2005, 2009) concluded that they choose distinct modes of acculturation. The choices are related to different variables like gender, age, education, occupation, etc. Finally, he differentiated between four acculturation strategies that can be applied with migrants:

- *marginalisation* – in which the individual lives outside the culture system (including his/her own), such an exclusion not necessarily being the individual's own decision;
- *separation* – the individual isolates him/herself from the society, which is usually a protest against a policy carried out by the host authorities. Such people, however, maintain contact with their own ethnic group and organise their social life within it;
- *assimilation* – the individual rejects his or her own culture and accepts the patterns of the host culture;
- *integration* – the individual combines the norms and rules of the home culture with those of the host culture.

As mentioned earlier, the acculturation process also applies to members of the host society. Their attitudes and behaviours towards newcomers have an influence on which strategies they decide to apply. Acculturation strategies which can be used by the dominant culture are the melting pot – which means that societies tend to assimilate all cultures into a cohesive whole; segregation – when the dominant group makes different cultures or races live separately; exclusion – when the dominant group supports the marginalisation of minority groups; and finally multiculturalism – when the dominant society promotes actions aimed at the development of a diverse society (Berry 2009). In fact, the migrants' decision on which acculturation strategy to choose is based on the dominant society's decision on a preferable acculturation strategy.

Social identity theory

Social identity theory has its roots in social psychology. It proposes a conceptual base for researching and accounting for issues regarding social identification, which is, according to Henri Tajfel (1981), based on social categorisation and comparison, meaning that groups may be compared and the positive or negative comparison has an impact on self-esteem (Ward 2001). The key issues applied in the process of categorisation and comparison are stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. As Stephan, Ybarra and Bachman (1999) claimed, negative outgroup stereotypes lead to prejudice and discrimination. The theory of prejudice appears to be essential to the further discussion in this article.

Analysing the issue of prejudice against minority groups, Stephan *et al.* (1999) pointed out four factors related to it: realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotyping. The realistic threats involve those relating to the welfare of the in-group, both economic and political or material well-being. They may take the form of competition for limited resources such as territory. Symbolic threats arise due to a person's belief that his or her group is superior to others, mostly because of the values, attitudes and norms which we hold on to. In fact, symbolic threats lead to both hostility and symbolic racism towards specific out-groups. This

is because members of the in-group are afraid that their worldview will be changed by the beliefs of out-groups. Usually, the symbolic threats appear when the worldviews of the two groups in contact are distant. Symbolic racism is understood here as a type of resistance to change in the *status quo*. Intergroup anxiety, in turn, deals with an individual's own personal concerns about intergroup interactions. It may occur when the groups have little knowledge about each other, are ethnocentric and have little personal contact. Finally, negative stereotypes are those that contribute to prejudice and discrimination. They justify the in-groups' adverse behaviour towards out-groups and allow members of the former to avoid contact with those from the out-groups (Stephan *et al.* 1999).

Research on international students in Poland

The first research on international students in Poland was carried out as early as the 1960s (Bielawska 1963) and continued through subsequent decades (Chodakowska 1971; Michowicz 1980; Yoka 1973). Initially, the research was with students who began their education either in the School of Polish Language for Foreign Students at Łódź University, where they came to study Polish for a year, or at the University of Warsaw, where the majority of international students were registered.

Since the 1990s, increasing numbers of academics have been undertaking research on international students (e.g. Gorbaniuk 1998; Mucha 2001; Rokicki 1998; de Carvalho 1990; Saleh 1995; Żołędowski 2010).

From the numerous studies on the problems of international students' adaptation to life in Poland, two deserve a special distinction. The first is the study entitled *Poland and Poles in My Eye* carried out in 1988 under the direction of Ewa Nowicka, the results of which were published in the book *Gość w dom. Studenci z krajów Trzeciego Świata* (Nowicka and Łodziński 1993). The survey was carried out on a sample of 444 overseas students studying in Warsaw and Łódź.

The second study is the Master's thesis of Paulo de Carvalho (1990), student from Angola studying at Warsaw University. He carried out a paper-based questionnaire on a representative random sample of foreigners studying in Poland in the academic year 1988–1989. In the end, 315 respondents took part in the questionnaire. The main aim of both studies was to examine the process of adaptation of overseas students to life in Poland and how the students perceive and estimate Polish society.

From the statistical data included in the studies, it appears that, in that period – i.e. at the turn of the 1980s and the early 1990s – those studying in Poland mainly came from the socialist block and developing countries where, on the whole, the level of higher education was lower than in Poland. Only a small number of citizens from countries with higher levels of economic and academic development studied in Poland; in this group, students of Polish origin predominated.

Overseas students experienced many adaptation problems; however, the scale and nature of the problems differed depending on the national minority. The biggest adaptation problems were experienced by students who differed the most from Poles in respect of their ethnic and cultural origins. The group consisted mainly of people from sub-Saharan and Arabic countries. Simultaneously, the group which had the fewest problems in adapting to life in Polish society were those who were the most similar to their hosts – students from Europe (Nowicka and Łodziński 1993).

Those from sub-Saharan countries highlighted the impossibility of leading a normal social and community life as the biggest difficulty of living in Poland (Nowicka and Łodziński 1993) this was dictated by the fear of becoming a victim of racist behaviour. Another very important problem mentioned by the research group was financial hardship as well as climatic and dietetic differences. In turn, for Arabs, who also complained about experiencing different discriminatory forms of behaviour, the process of adaptation to Polish culture was

a little easier. This may be, to a great extent, the result of their better financial situation and, at the same time, the greater likelihood that they would be able to fulfil their social needs (de Carvalho 1990).

International students also differed in respect of the life difficulties which they were experiencing in Poland. While Africans and Arabs the most frequently mentioned discrimination, Europeans and Americans more frequently spoke of the difficulties of handling official matters and the impertinence of shop assistants (de Carvalho 1990).

Summing up, international students studying in Poland at the end of the 1980s, according to de Carvalho (1990), can be divided into the following groups: a) students not having major difficulty in adapting to life in Poland (those from the USA or Eastern Europe), b) students with a middle level of adaptation (Western Europe, Asia), c) students with a low degree of adaptation (Hispanics, Arabs) and d) students with very low levels of adaptation (Africans).

Methodological approach

The empirical basis for the study was the data collected during our field research at the Medical University in Łódź. In the study mixed research methods were employed: both a paper-based questionnaire filled out by overseas students and three focus-group interviews.

The paper-based questionnaire with medical and dental students from overseas and those attending a one- or two-year PREMED or access course for medical studies was distributed at the beginning of 2016.¹ Completed questionnaires were handed in during the last class of a given course toward the end of the winter semester. Completion was voluntary and the survey was eventually filled out by 74 international students. The research was carried out in English because the vast majority of the respondents did not speak Polish. Their courses were all conducted in English, although the students were also taught basic Polish language skills in order that they may communicate in public.

Based on the survey data, semi-structured interview questions were developed for the three focus groups in order to gain in-depth data on whether and how international students adapt to their new living and learning environment. The focus-groups were composed of 24 international students. All the discussions were recorded, transcribed, encoded in Atlas.ti and analysed against the previously prepared analysis categories. In both cases the students interviewed stayed in Poland for no less than six months and, in most cases, for longer than a year. The qualitative data collected from the focus-group discussions were employed to triangulate the depth and breadth of the original survey responses.

The total number of completed questionnaires was low and thereby does not enable us to claim the validity or the generalisability of the data. However, they could be a very useful trigger for future studies on the issue of international students in Poland.

The research group

In the academic year 2015/16 at the MUL there were 567 international students (including those on the PREMED course) from over 50 countries whereas, in 2011 the number had been just 257 people – (data obtained from the university). International students studying at the MUL in 2016 came from six continents and 49 countries: Africa (Angola, Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Libya, Namibia, Nigeria, Swaziland, Sudan); Asia (Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Oman, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Cyprus, South Korea, Thailand); Australia; Europe (Belarus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland,

Ukraine, UK); North America (Canada, USA); South America (Brazil, Panama). The dominant group, however, were students from Saudi Arabia (about 26 per cent of all students) and other Muslim countries.

The sample consisted of overseas students from 21 countries (Table 2). However, the dominant participant group was Muslim (43 students), mainly from Saudi Arabia (28 students). There were also 16 students who were Christians of different faiths and four who defined themselves as followers of other religions or philosophical movements (Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Agnosticism). The remaining participants did not follow any religion.

Table 1. Demographic features of the research group (N=74)

Sex	N	%
Man	41	55,4
Woman	33	44,6
Age		
17–19	11	14.9
20–22	45	60.8
23–25	10	13.5
26–29	5	6.7
Lack of data	3	4.1

Source: Author's survey.

Among the respondents, men outnumbered women by 55.4 per cent to 44.6 per cent (Table 1). At the same time, 63 per cent of the students had been in Poland between six months and a year, 8 per cent between one and two years and the remaining 29 per cent for more than two years. A further seven students (9 per cent), owing to their Polish origins, had more frequent contacts with Poland and used to go there in their childhood.

Our sample was very diverse. Some of the students came from multicultural families (parents with different origins) and had already experienced a longer stay away from home – a situation characteristic, for example, of citizens of countries in Western Europe. These citizens often had dual citizenship owing to the fact that both of their parents came from outside Europe but had lived in Europe for many years.

Table 2. Respondents by nationality and religion (N=74)

National/ethnic origin	Christianity				Islam		Other religions/ philosophical movements					TOTAL
	Catholicism	Orthodox Church	Protestantism	Others	Sunnism	Shiism	Buddhism	Hinduism	Zoroastranism	Agnosticism	Atheism	
ASIA					15	20		1	1		5	42
Saudi Arabia					12	16						28
Afghanistan					1							1
India								1				1
Iraq						1					2	3
Iran						1			1		1	3
Liban						1						1
Pakistan						1						1
Tajikistan					1							1
Taiwan											2	2
Turkey					1							1
AFRICA	1	1	1	1	2	1					1	8
Kenya			1									1
Nigeria		1		1	1	1					1	5
Sudan					1							1
Zimbabwe	1											1
NORTH AMERICA	3					1				1		5
Canada	1											1
The United States	2					1				1		4
SOUTH AMERICA											1	1
Brazil											1	1
EUROPE	5	1	3		2	2	1				3	17
Germany	4		3									7
Norway					1	1					2	4
Great Britain	1	1			1	1	1				1	6
AUSTRALIA											1	1
TOTAL	9	2	4	1	19	24	1	1	1	1	11	74

Source: Author's survey.

Findings

Reasons for studying in Poland

For international students at the MUL, the most significant factor influencing their choice of university was the recommendation of family and friends or of people who had already studied at the MUL (Table 3). What were less important were the formal issues connected with taking up medical studies in Poland. Some of the students came to the country since their national governments had signed bilateral agreements with Poland and certain universities were interested in accepting students from another country. This was the case for students from Saudi Arabia, which explains why so many young people from this country study in Łódź. What also matters is the cost of medical studies in Poland, which is much lower than in other European countries. However, a less crucial reason for choosing a medical university in Poland was belief in the competitive aspect of education in the country compared to other European countries. The focus-group interviews revealed another fairly important reason for taking up studies in Poland, especially for students from Europe and in particular Scandinavia and Germany. In many countries the number of places in medical schools is strictly limited, which results in strong competition between candidates. Only those graduates who receive top grades in most subjects in school-leaving exams are eligible. This means that the possibility to study medicine in Poland, where still it is much cheaper than in Western Europe, is the only alternative way for many people to fulfil their dreams.

Table 3. Reasons for taking up medical studies in Poland (N=74)

<i>Respondents could choose more than one answer</i>	N	%
Medical studies in Poland are cheaper than in other European countries	19	25.7
The system of education is competitive when compared to other European countries	7	9.5
My country has written a bilateral agreement with Poland concerning the education of future medical staff	21	28.4
A person studying here earlier recommended studying here to me	24	32.4
Family/friends recommended to me studying in Poland	30	40.5

Source: Author's survey.

The advantages of living in Poland

Analysis of our research findings shows that the international students concentrated mostly on the difficulties experienced during their stay in Poland, which we describe below. The advantages of living in Poland, although discussed with the students during the interviews, were not given significant attention. In spite of the fact that the international students did not focus particularly on this facet of their life in Poland, a few answers describing the positive aspects are worth mentioning. Here, they mostly emphasised the positive changes which took place, such as gaining or developing certain skills, among which self-reliance – understood as the necessity to solve the problems of everyday life on their own, as illustrated in the three interview extracts below.

I learnt to be a little more independent and responsible. I learnt to catch on to things quickly to survive (S_17_Zimbabwe).²

I cook, I clean, I don't have a driver or a maid (S_32_Saudi Arabia).

I am more independent now. I have travelled to European countries. I can deal with my own problems. I cook for myself. I get to know different people with different personalities and religions and backgrounds (S_67_Lebanon).

Another skill which they gained was openness towards people from other cultures. Many students emphasised that, before going to study in Poland, they had not had many opportunities to mix with people from different cultures. For many, it was the first time that they had travelled not only to Europe but also to a country which was culturally completely different from their own and, again for the first time, they could meet with people of many races and cultures.

I am more open to people or other cultures and religions and also tradition. I am gradually adjusting to the way of life here (S_12_Nigeria).

I never really had the chance to meet so many different races until now. My view on Muslims has become more positive as I consider them as my friends (S_43_Nigeria).

Individual students pointed to other skills or qualities which they gained as a result of living in Poland. Their responses imply that they have overcome any culture shock and are learning the norms and rules which are binding in Polish society. Understanding some of the weaknesses of Poles and accepting some of the customs of the new culture enabled the students to adjust to the new cultural milieu.

I got more patient because Polish people need a lot of time for everything (S_16_Germany).

I pay more attention to the clothes I wear and my general appearance. Polish people try to look very presentable even if they are just going out to get bread in the morning (S_34_USA).

The new academic milieu: hardships encountered

Those who came to study in Poland often took on a big challenge – they embarked on difficult and strenuous studies taught in English which, for most of the students, was not their native language. As the research shows, the biggest difficulty which students have is in assimilating vast amounts of information on every subject (Table 4). This problem might be related to another issue – the fact that the Polish education system can differ from the particular national systems to which the students were accustomed (24.3 per cent of answers). At the same time, many people did not have any previous experience of higher-level studies. The transition from high school to university, where the need for the quick assimilation of information is paramount, can be an extra problem. The students emphasised that they had problems assimilating so much detail in such a short time. It is worth noting here that, in Eastern Europe, the dominant model of teaching medicine is still the traditional model, with its overloaded syllabi, in contrast to the rest of the world, where problem-based learning is the prevailing model (Janczukowicz 2013).

Table 4. International students' perception of hardships having impact on their studies (N=74)

<i>Students could choose more than one answer</i>	N	%
There are too many subjects and too much information which I must learn and assimilate in a short time	38	51.4
The education system is different than in my country, which makes it difficult for me to adjust to it	18	24.3
The teachers demand too much and in a short time	21	28.4
The teachers are not helpful	18	24.3
I have health problems	1	1.4
I have family/personal problems	3	4.1
Other reasons	10	13.5

Source: Author's survey.

The approach of the lecturers towards their teaching and students was also mentioned by the international students as an essential obstacle to learning. In this case the biggest objection was the lecturers' inability to and lack of skill in conducting classes in such a way that students would be encouraged to participate in them. The students pointed out that the prevailing form of lecture is that during which the teacher dictates the material or read out ready-made PowerPoint presentations; however, the students miss seminars conducted in a suitable way – i.e. engaging and based on discussions. International students claimed that there is a vast and simple cultural difference in the approach of the teachers towards the students. In their view, Polish teachers remain distant, do not smile, cannot or do not want to establish closer relationships with students and are not helpful when students have difficulties with learning – it is difficult to receive any extra help from them after lecture hours.

During the focus-group interviews the students emphasised another problem concerning academic life which can have an impact on their adaptation to life in Polish society. They were referring to the difficulties they had in establishing closer contacts with the academic community – with both teachers and host-country students. Some of the respondents regretted that their friendly contacts were limited mainly to those with their compatriots and other international students. Some students claimed that they miss the kind of close contacts with native-Polish students which would enable them to become more familiar with Polish culture.

I would like to know more about Polish culture and Polish students, but I don't have the opportunity to meet anybody (FG_3_India).

According to our respondents, Polish students are not open to contacts with them as, so they claim, the latter are afraid of people who are different from them. This kind of opinion was expressed firstly by students from Arabic countries, who claimed that host-country students are prejudiced against them.

I feel bad here. I think that, because of my hijab and Islam, other students don't want to communicate with us (FG_1_Iran).

Polish students don't respect us; they look at us like strangers and don't want to interact with us (FG_1_Saudi Arabia).

It seems, though, that the lack of close relations between Polish and international students is more complex and is the result of both individual and external barriers. The majority of research students admitted that they

had not yet tried to establish closer contacts with Poles, justifying this kind of behaviour by the fact that the latter do not want it or that international students do not have an opportunity to make contact with members of the host community. This is perhaps because the majority of the international students do not belong to any social organisation or sports clubs where such contacts could be made. So, on the one hand, they want to get to know Polish students better but, on the other, they do nothing to initiate this, shifting the responsibility for the lack of contact onto the host-country students. Polish students in turn claimed (during classes on intercultural communication) that they would like to get to know international students better but do not have the opportunity, due to their limited contact with them – for example, in the canteen. Moreover, even many Polish students said that they were discriminated against at their own university, claiming that international students are treated better by the university authorities, have priority access to the better classrooms, are given preferential treatment (for example, Muslim women do not have to take off their *hijab* when entering the operating theatre) and have better learning conditions (clinical classes are conducted in smaller groups).

One example of an external barrier might be the lack of a well-thought-out university policy aimed at the integration of both groups of students. At the MUL there is the Administrative Centre for Medical Studies in English, to where international students can turn with any problems – a centre which the students think highly of.

The university initiates various activities aimed at familiarising international students with Polish culture as well as integrating them within their own group. However, there is a shortage of activities which would integrate Polish and international students. In fact, the majority of the events organised are aimed at one or the other group but not the two together. This is especially the case with medical students. One key reason may be that lessons for Polish students are conducted in Polish. Initiatives are needed for organising optional courses in English which would be directed at both groups of students. However, this lack may either be an artificially created obstacle of an administrative nature or a lack of awareness of the positive mutual influence which such classes could have on the two groups.

Communication with the host community: an overall assessment

Migration policy drawn up by state authorities can affect the acculturation strategy chosen by newcomers. It seems, though, that, for international students, relations with host community have the biggest influence on their choice of strategy. In their interviews, the respondents spoke frequently about their relations with host-country nationals, without ever mentioning discussions on migration held by politicians.

The international students found that relations with the host community were very difficult – however, their opinions differed depending on the person's origins.

To enable examination of the differences in international students' assessments of their encounters with the host community, detailed results are presented, both generally and separately for the four groups of students classified according to both the common features of their group and the differences between them (Table 5). Physical appearance was assumed to be the differentiating factor. As a result, the following groups were distinguished: dark-skinned people, people with white skin, Arabs and Asians who come from countries other than Arabic countries. This stereotypical division was made intentionally as it allows a better assessment of the results achieved, which indicate how international students feel in Poland and how they feel that they are perceived by the receiving society.

As the survey showed, as many as 51.4 per cent of respondents experienced aggression in Poland due to origin, religion or skin colour. At the same time, 13.5 per cent of international students met with aggression in the academic environment. Outside university this latter was experienced to the greatest degree by the Arabs, with Asians the only students who did not come up against this form of aggression. It is worth mentioning here

that, in research carried out by Nowicka and Łodziński (1993) and de Carvalho (1990), Asians also coped the best in contacts with Polish society and complained the least about racist behaviour towards them.

Table 5. International students' individual assessment of their stay in Poland (N=74)

Total	Total		Muslims		Dark-skinned people		White skin people		Asians (except for Arab countries)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	74	100	46	62.2	7	9.4	16	21.6	5	6.8
Do you feel safe in Poland?										
Yes	37	50.0	19	25.7	2	2.7	13	17.6	3	4.0
No	14	18.9	10	13.6	2	2.7	1	1.4	1	1.4
I have no opinion	23	31.1	17	22.8	3	4.0	2	2.7	1	1.4
How do you feel living in Poland?										
Very good	15	20.4	7	9.5	1	1.4	6	8.1	1	1.4
Good	31	41.8	20	27.0	2	2.7	6	8.1	3	4.0
Neither good nor bad	24	32.4	16	21.6	3	4.0	4	5.4	1	1.4
Bad	4	5.4	3	4.0	1	1.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Have you ever met with any form of aggression in Poland because of your origin / religion / nationality / skin colour?										
Yes	38	51.2	27	36.3	5	6.8	6	8.1	0	0.0
No	36	48.8	19	25.7	2	2.7	10	13.6	5	6.8
Have you ever met with any form of aggression at the university because of your origin / religion / nationality / skin colour?										
Yes	10	13.5	8	10.8	2	2.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
No	64	86.5	38	51.3	5	6.8	16	21.6	5	6.8

Source: Author's survey.

The aim of subsequent questions that the respondents were asked – ‘Do you feel safe in Poland?’ and ‘How do you feel in Poland?’ – was to verify how much the different forms of aggression which international students experienced from host-country nationals translated into either a real sense of security and satisfaction or into dissatisfaction with their stay in Poland. What is surprising is that, in spite of the aggression experienced in Poland, only 18.9 per cent of respondents claimed they did not feel safe there. Simultaneously, only four respondents (three Arabs and one sub-Saharan African) claimed to feel uncomfortable in Poland, with 60 per cent claiming that they feel good there. The explanation for this situation – on the one hand, aggression experienced from host-country nationals and, on the other, their relative satisfaction with life in Poland – is expressed here by an Arabic student of Muslim origin born in the UK. As a citizen of the UK but also a person who differs from the majority of British people in appearance and religion, he had already experienced forms of aggression and was thus able to make a more objective comparison between Poland and other EU countries than were other international students who had never spent time outside their country of origin.

(...) you can meet with acts of aggression towards minorities in almost every country nowadays. In Poland it is not so bad. It is not that I am afraid to go out, although I know I have to avoid certain parts of the city.

Because I am a Muslim I prefer not to travel by public transport. However, in the place where I come from [here he mentions the name of a small town in Great Britain – PP] it is sometimes even worse. There are areas where it is really dangerous for Muslims, much more dangerous than in Łódź (FG_3_the United Kingdom).

Another factor which could affect international students' overall opinion of Polish society could be that our focus-group participants were mainly those who had stayed in Poland for less than a year. Their opinions might lead one to presume that they were the very people who were going through the phase of culture shock on account of the different adaptation problems which they were experiencing at and outside the university.

During the focus-group interviews the respondents did not hide their frustration – the result of their stay in Poland. However, when they were asked to give the main reasons for their disappointment, it turned out that these were usually the result of culture shock caused by existing cultural differences. Among them were the earlier-mentioned issues of their inability to communicate with Polish people due to the language barrier, the impossibility of handling administrative matters, the lack of understanding of the culture code in Polish society, the dissatisfaction resulting from contacts with teachers (the too-formal attitude of teachers towards students) and even the dissatisfaction with the conditions offered by the university (one students mentioned, for example, poor training conditions in some classrooms or even a limited menu offered by the university canteens).

I expected to communicate with Poles and learn about their culture but for various reasons they don't feel safe talking and engaging in a conversation with any of us (FG_2_Saudi Arabia).

I found it really hard to solve my problem in an office. Polish people work very slowly (FG_3_Turkey).

The only problem is that some Polish people are not well educated or they are raised in a racist family and have problems with foreigners and they always want to insult people of different skin colour and religion. But Poland also has lots of good and kind people (FG_2_Afghanistan).

The focus-group interviews turned out to play an important therapeutic role, too. One of the female students from a Middle-Eastern country, who stated or even sometimes shouted out the reasons why she felt so bad in Poland and at the university, said at the end of the interview:

I would like to thank you for this discussion. It was very important for me that I could say this. Now I feel that somebody listened to me. I hope that this research contributes to some changes here at the university and maybe outside (FG_1_Iran).

Communication with the host community: examples of encountered racism

From research by de Carvalho (1990) and by Nowicka and Łodziński (1993) it appears that, in the 1980s, the group which had the greatest adaptation problems, caused by the intensely experienced racist behaviour due to their skin colour, were the students from sub-Saharan Africa. Another group who also met with many racist forms of behaviour were the Arabs; they, however, coped with racism based on prejudice much better. The present study shows that these two groups still experience different forms of aversion or even physical aggression most intensely. However, such negative forms of behaviour are less frequent now towards both groups. At present, Arabic students, more often than students from sub-Saharan Africa, complain about encountering racist behaviour.

I am afraid of some people who hate Arabs and Muslims and they always want to fight with us (S_25_Saudi Arabia).

I faced hatred and aggression twice since I came to Poland. Both times it was on a tram in Łódź. There were some guys who started using words (insulting my religion) only because I have a beard and moustache and I am brown (FG_2_Afghanistan).

Many times, Polish guys wanted to start a fight with us for no reason (...) (FG_3_Saudi Arabia).

Prejudice against Arabs is motivated mainly by their different religion and culture but is also influenced by the political situation in the world. The research was carried out at a time when Europe was experiencing terrorist attacks by members of Muslim terrorist organisations. At the same time, a surge of refugees from war-torn countries such as Syria arrived in Europe. The public media magnified the issue of European values being threatened by the Muslim world. Arabic students claimed that, in spite of the fact that they do not support ISIS, people are still wary of them due to their Muslim religion.

Just because there are terrorist groups that claim to be Muslim doesn't mean that we approve of them. By the way, ISIS attacked my city twice (FG_2_Iraq).

Europeans usually hate Muslims because of ISIS. So people usually try to avoid us. I was also bad-mouthed and told to get out of Poland because it is not for Muslims (FG_1_Saudi Arabia).

I went bowling in 'Manufaktura' [the shopping centre in Łódź]. There was a man on another track. He came to me and asked 'Are you Muslim?'. I said I am Muslim. And he said he was Catholic. I congratulated him. He asked me if I was a terrorist. I smiled and said I am not a terrorist. I asked him: 'Why do you ask?'. After a minute he asked: 'Is your brother a terrorist?'. I smiled again and tried to ignore him. After a moment he came up very close to me and started shouting that my family are terrorists and Polish people hate Muslims and all Muslims should leave Poland (FG_3_Saudi Arabia).

It is worth mentioning here that both male and female Muslim students encountered acts of aggression. However, the evidence suggests that female Muslim students were more often subjected to verbal and physical attacks than were other international students due to the fact that they wear the *hijab* and because women, as physically weaker, are an easier target of attacks.

One man took off my headscarf when I was getting off the train, which was unpredictable behaviour. After that other people with that man yelled and said bad words (FG1_Saudi Arabia).

Someone started taking a picture of me because I was wearing the hijab and he said some words in Polish. I didn't understand it – but I was really scared (FG_1_Saudi Arabia).

Someone wanted to take off my scarf (young man). Even though many people were on the street nobody reacted (FG_3_Saudi Arabia).

I hear bad words because I have a different religion. I wear a scarf, I speak a different language – sometimes they even look on us as strange people. They shout at us at least twice a week. People don't help.

They don't even speak English with us whether they know the language or not. Poland is not too safe (FG_2_Saudi Arabia).

Racially motivated aggression was also experienced by students who were different from the host community on account of their skin colour. However, it is impossible to present the scale of the problem due to the fact that only seven students from sub-Saharan Africa participated in the survey. In this group, five people claimed to have been the target of acts of racism. They claimed to experience such acts the most frequently in public places: being sworn at and people blatantly staring at them.

Men approach me and my friends and tell us to go back to our country (FG_2_Sudan).

Just a lot of staring, of taking pictures in public places (S_17_Zimbabwe).

Racial profiling, racial name-calling (FG_2_Kenya).

However, it is worth emphasising here that white people in our survey from Europe, the USA or Canada seldom complained about acts of aggression towards them. The exception were citizens of Poland's neighbouring countries; this could be the result of national stereotypes.

A person was shouting at me because I was speaking in German on the tram (S_42_Germany).

In spite of the fact that an in-depth analysis of the attitude of Polish society towards national minorities is not the focus of this article, in order to understand the different adaptation difficulties which people experience, it is worth analysing the results of the survey carried out in 2018 on a representative random sample of adult Poles regarding their attitude towards certain nations.

The results clearly confirm what was established in this study – the fact that Arabic students feel that many Polish people are prejudiced against them. The evidence shows that Polish people mainly prefer citizens of the USA and Western Europe. Chinese people, who are culturally very different from Poles, are a group towards whom the majority of Poles have a positive or neutral attitude. Meanwhile as many as 62 per cent of Poles claimed that they do not like Arabs. The survey, carried out by the Public Opinion Research Center (Omyła-Rudzka 2018), did not include nationalities from Africa.

The reasons behind such a dislike of people of Arabic origin are many and varied. Helpful in explaining the situation is the theory of prejudices developed by Stephen *et al.* (1999) which was cited in the theoretical section of this paper. The authors indicated four possible factors of prejudice against other national and ethnic groups: realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotyping. It seems justified to state that all these factors play a significant role in explaining the existing prejudice against Arabs.

The main reason for the existing prejudice against Arabs is the very limited knowledge that Polish people have about Muslim culture and Islam. The Arabic minority living in Poland is quite small, which is why many Poles have never had an opportunity to get to know the real representatives of this community. This, in turn, influences a simplified and often erroneous perception of this group (intergroup anxiety), a negative and stereotypical image of Arabs which is mostly exacerbated by the media and right-wing populist politicians. Together they portray Arabs as posing a threat for Christian and democratic values (symbolic threats) owing to their different religion and the quite strong belief of Polish society that Islam is a dangerous religion supporting terrorism. Rightist politicians also show the group in a bad light, contributing thus to society's belief that there

is a real threat to the Polish population's safety. While conducting workshops with Polish students on intercultural communication I often ask them about their perception of the different minority groups living in Poland. These students are quite often of the opinion that Arabs do not respect European values and want to transfer the principles of their culture, including Sharia, to Europe. Some Polish students also think that *jihad* means 'war against infidels' – which includes Christians – and that Islam promotes *jihad*, encouraging its believers to commit terrorist attacks (negative stereotypes).

Summing up this part, it is worth emphasising that accusing the host community of 'racism' does not always have to be consistent with the actual meaning of this word. During focus-group interviews, it was fairly evident that, occasionally, certain kinds of behaviour by host nationals towards ethnic minorities are over-interpreted. Examples of racist behaviour which the students gave included Poles staring at them, turning their back on them or gesturing with fingers. Certainly, this kind of behaviour can cause anxiety in an individual; however, it does not have to mean that it is related to negative behaviour towards ethnic minorities. An individual's different appearance or clothes can sometimes catch some people's attention. Poland is still a quite homogeneous country. In smaller towns, people of a different race can still stand out and attract attention. What matters is the fact that, when analysing the official statistics on racist crimes in Poland, Łódź province or Łódź itself, it is noticeable that the problem does not seem to be particularly significant; however, the number of stated crimes is growing year on year. It is certain that most of the different forms of behaviour defined as racist are not reported to the police by the victims.

Conclusions

In this study I am investigating the main problems experienced by international students at the Medical University of Łódź. In the initial section of this paper, four research questions were put forward to which this study should provide the answers.

The first question regarded the difficulties faced when studying in a foreign academic environment. The study shows that the problems experienced by international students in an academic milieu other than that of their home country are very complex and mainly concern their adaptation to the new system of education and the way in which they manage the acquisition of new knowledge and make contact with host-country students. In spite of the fact that all the international students experienced problems studying in a foreign academic milieu, the degree of these difficulties varied. The hardships were related mostly to cultural differences. Students from Europe or America had fewer difficulties in Poland than students from Africa or the Middle East as a result, firstly, of the level of education and the curricula of the secondary education in the different countries. Secondly, their problems may result from cultural differences which also impact on the style of learning. What is noticeable in my teaching practice is that there are differences in the methods of learning preferred by the students: group learning, individual learning and willingness to hold discussions with their tutors, etc. Moreover, there is a noticeable difference in their attitude to learning and plagiarising. Some of the international students are not aware of such unethical conduct as plagiarism – one fairly frequent type of behaviour early on in the studies of students from some regions is submitting homework copied from the Internet. Thirdly, cultural and phenotypical differences may contribute to the problems experienced in contacts with host students. The lack of shared classes and activities is a strong barrier to communication between these two groups, which results in a separation between them.

All these factors result from the assumption that Polish students do not like certain international students – mostly those from Arab and African countries – and are prejudiced against them due to their religion, culture or race.

The second question concerns the hardships influencing students' adaptation to the new society. The international students indicated problems such as loneliness, homesickness, dietary differences or the climate and

a great many of them voiced concerns about the difficulties they have in making contact with the host society and the lack of mutual understanding. To explain these concerns a reference should be made to Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede *et al.* 2010). It is well known that the factor facilitating or hampering adaptation is the cultural or even religious similarity or lack of similarity with the dominant culture. Those who come from the same cultural environment put less effort into learning the principles of a new culture, better understand the hosts and, at the same time, are usually more accepted by the host nationals. In particular, similarities or differences in such cultural dimensions as power distance and individualism–collectivism matter. Poland is considered (Hofstede Insights n.d.) as a country of high power distance, which means that it is a hierarchical society. People accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has their place and which needs no further justification. Poland is also an individualist country, which means that people prefer a loose-knit social framework. They are expected to take care of themselves and their close family in the first instance (Hofstede *et al.* 2010).

All these cultural similarities or differences have a significant impact on the adaptation of particular groups of international students to Polish culture. Those from Slavic nations of Central and Eastern Europe – due to the language and historical and cultural similarities – are assumed to have the fewest problems adapting to Polish culture. Students from individualist cultures (Europe or North America) also adjust more easily to the new environment than do those from collectivist cultures (Asia, Africa), with the differences primarily being seen in the case of Asian and African societies. Students from Arabic countries or, to a lesser extent, from African countries, experienced greater culture shock due to the strong cultural and religious differences, their lack of knowledge about the culture and norms binding in Polish society or to language barriers.

The third question regards overseas students' experiences of contact with the members of Polish society. The biggest adaptation challenge for the respondents was the attitude of the receiving society towards them which they perceived as quite negative. The prejudice against international students of a different race, nationality or religion is one of the most important reasons for their negative mood. During the focus-group interviews, the students emphasised that the group the most discriminated against were the Muslim and sub-Saharan students due to the visible features of their appearance. These students claimed that they did not always feel safe in Poland. In public places they often met with different forms of verbal and sometimes even physical aggression. This kind of behaviour influences their negative image of Polish society and is the main barrier in their adaptation to the new culture.

The students who were the most disappointed with their stay in Poland usually shifted the whole responsibility for this state of affairs onto Polish society which, according to them, is closed and intolerant of people from a different culture. At the same time, they idealised countries of Western Europe as being open and tolerant – which is not necessarily true. As other studies show (e.g. Brown and Jones 2013), racial attacks also occur elsewhere in Europe. Simultaneously, the interviewed students did not feel that they may also be partly to blame for the fact that they felt uncomfortable in Poland. They did not understand that it is not only up to the receiving society to be open to foreigners but also that foreigners must be more open to and tolerant of the values of the dominant culture. The research students admitted that, at the time of making the decision to go to Poland, they usually had very limited knowledge of the country whereas, as Winkelman emphasises, people deciding on a longer stay abroad should prepare for it. They must be aware of and open to possible changes. At the same time, they must be 'prepared to deal with personal rejection, prejudice and discrimination. (...) Psychological preparation for the outsider status is essential, because most people immersed in a foreign culture will experience a negative evaluation of their differences and a rejection by the members of the host culture' (Winkelman 1994: 124).

The fourth question concerns the ways in which international students adapt to the new culture. Adaptation means a 'minimum adjustment to the environment enabling survival' (Budyta-Budzyńska 2011: 46). This means neither rejecting the receiving culture, as happens in the case of marginalisation and separation, nor excessive acceptance and assimilation of the patterns of the new culture. Such an approach is often chosen by

international students at the MUL due to their pragmatic attitude to the dominant culture. The majority of them intend to return to their own cultures and they treat their stay in Poland as a task that they must carry out. Adaptation does not mean, however, that the newcomer must entirely abandon his or her own system of values, as values assimilated from the new culture can be strictly ancillary in nature (Halik and Nowicka 2002). On account of the fact that many students assume that their stay in the new culture has a task-to-perform character, they usually do not seek to build up deep and lasting relationships with the members of the receiving culture. Contacts with such people they can treat as a pragmatic approach, which will help them in their everyday life in the alien environment (Halik and Nowicka 2002).

It should be emphasised that, in case of international students at the MUL, adaptation is also influenced by the subject of their studies, since they treat their stay in Poland as a task which they must perform. These students usually do not see their future in Poland. Their stay is strongly oriented towards obtaining the desired education and returning to their own country or to another Western country, due to the fact that to practise a profession in Poland it is necessary to be fluent in the Polish language and to pass an exam to certify that they are fully qualified to practice as a doctor there. The National Medical Examination can be taken in English; however, running a medical practice in English would be difficult in Poland. Therefore, the majority of students do not feel the need to try, for example, to establish closer relations with Polish people, as was the case for many international students in the 1980s, in order to make their life in Polish society easier, to get to know the society better and maybe to start a new life there (de Carvalho 1990; Nowicka and Łodziński 1993). The economic situation of international students studying at the MUL, as well as their career prospects, are completely different to those of many international students who studied in Poland in the twentieth century, although it may still be the case for international students currently studying other subjects in Poland than medicine. Medical studies are quite expensive, therefore they are not usually chosen by people from poor families. At the same time, people studying medicine are not afraid of not finding a job in the medical profession and the studies in English let them take up employment in many countries.

Notes


¹ The participants of the PREMED course are treated as students. They have an established curriculum, classes are held on each weekday, attendance is compulsory and the course ends with an exam or another previously set form of credit.

² Meaning of symbols: S-survey, FGI-focus group interview. Next number of survey or FGI is given and the respondent's country of origin.

Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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How to cite this article: Przyłęcki P. (2018). International Students at the Medical University of Łódź: Adaptation Challenges and Culture Shock Experienced in a Foreign Country. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* 7(2): 209–232.

— BOOK REVIEWS —

Adela Souralova (2015). *New Perspectives on Mutual Dependency in Care-Giving*. Farnham: Ashgate, 158 pp.

There are several matters that make Czech sociologist Adéla Souralová's in-depth study on post-migratory care arrangements in the Czech Republic a unique and remarkable venture. The first – and a very important one – is her choice of the topic, a previously unconsidered, widespread yet relatively invisible phenomenon related to Vietnamese migration to East-Central Europe. As it happens, there are generations of Vietnamese migrant children in the Czech Republic who have been raised by Czech women while in fact living in these Czech women's homes. This is a rather unique arrangement in the global world of care, as it is Vietnamese migrant entrepreneurs who are hiring Czech women to care for their children while they work in the same country, quite often in their children's vicinity. The research design that the author applied throughout the course of her work, her doctoral project in fact, also makes the final outcome exemplary. She studied the triadic relationships between care work demander immigrant mothers, Czech carers she usually refers to as nannies or grandmas, and migrant children. Between 2010 and 2012, she used purposeful sampling to meticulously handpick her qualitative data, interviewing a total of fifty persons involved in these relationships. Finally and very importantly, Souralová's research had a special focus on the perspectives of migrant youths on childcare arrangements – a subject that has received little academic attention so far – and thus provides rich insight into experiences of growing up transnationally.

New Perspectives on Mutual Dependency in Care-Giving is a substantial contribution to the growing body of scholarly literature on the intimate aspects of international migration in East, Southeast and Central Europe. The project upon which Adéla

Souralová's monograph is based represents one of the earliest attempts to show and understand how migration has also impacted family life and childcare regimes in the East Central European region.

The seven chapters of the hardcover volume are followed by a collection of tables containing information about the interviewees, an extensive list of references, and an index. Throughout the chapters Souralová seeks the answers to a number of questions, such as why many Vietnamese migrant mothers opt for the delegation of childcare; why it is worthwhile for Czech women to become full-time carers of a young migrant child in their own homes; and in what way the specific relationship that formed between carers and children serves migrants' integration in local society.

Highlighting the intimate empirical foundation of the book, the first six chapters are titled with quotes from interviewees, and the topics of these chapters are introduced by excerpts taken from the texts of the interviews with the contributors from the field. Chapter one presents the care regime of Vietnamese children in the Czech Republic and outlines the structure of the book. It is in this chapter that the author introduces the notion of mutual dependency, a concept borrowed from care literature related to international migration which she used as a tool to interpret what happens in the triadic relationships between migrant parents, their children, and local carers. The author also uses the conceptual framework of modern anthropological kinship theory relying on a performative definition of kinship (as opposed to a biogenetic one) and adopting Signe Howell's concept of 'kinning' to describe the bonding process between Czech carers and Vietnamese children. The introduction explains the research design, its specificities, and the methodology applied.

Chapter two explores why Vietnamese migrant parents delegate the care of their children to local women. This part familiarises readers with the general Vietnamese migrant context in the Czech Republic. We learn

that it was as early as 1956 that the first international agreement allowed a couple of hundred war victims to enter the country and settle there. Subsequent phases of bilateral cooperation allowed several hundred Vietnamese students to enrol in Czech universities starting in the 1960s, mostly in technical programmes. Further agreements of mutual assistance followed in the 1970s, as a result of which thirty thousand Vietnamese students, apprentices and young workers were present in the country in the early 1980s, only two thirds of whom returned to Vietnam. When entrepreneurial possibilities opened up in the region after 1990, it therefore became an attractive destination for Vietnamese economic migrants, some of whom were returnees with pre-existent social networks. With these new migratory waves, the Vietnamese migrant population grew to sixty thousand, becoming the third largest immigrant group in the Czech Republic after Slovaks and Ukrainians.

The author claims that it is the economic migrants' 'occupational position that requires quantitative changes in work life and leads to its intensification at the expense of private life' (p. 27). Her interviews with mothers reveal that it is common in Vietnam to return to work a couple of months after giving birth; furthermore, the mothers' choice to employ Czech carers is also defined by their intention to reproduce their kinship networks in the host country and to fulfil their socioculturally shaped ideal of relatives in family life (p. 15). Souralová's work clearly demonstrates how Vietnamese parenting strategies and childcare models clash with Western 'myths of motherhood' (p. 31) and the ideology of 'intensive mothering' (p. 31). The author's observations on the culture-specific, non-universal perspectives of Vietnamese immigrants with regard to motherhood and good care are very important contributions to the field, and concord with Leslie K. Wang's findings in another case involving a confrontation of Western and East Asian notions of good care and motherhood (Wang 2016). Souralová shows that Vietnamese mothers' parenting strategy is defined by the intention to provide a better future for their children, a goal they

hope to realise by delegating the care of their children and spending more time working.

Chapter three focuses on the motivations of Czech women who choose to enter into such care relationships, and provides rich insights into these personal processes. The author notes that the overwhelming majority of carers in her sample were financially dependent on the welfare state at the time when they became carers. However, upon further reflection she argues that the reason in fact lies in the subjective motivation of these Czech women, which can be understood through what she calls their 'caring biographies', which are constructed according to local gender norms.

The fourth chapter presents and discusses mothers', children's and carers' reflections on the delegation of childcare, their positions and roles in the care relationship. The mothering strategies of Vietnamese migrants (fulfilling one's duties as a mother through labour market activity; i.e. working harder to give one's children a better life), and Czech carers' perceptions of motherhood (giving affection, physical contact, spending time together) and good child care (a tendency towards feeling morally superior for providing 'better care') are analysed and contrasted. After these first two sections, the third part of chapter four presents the children's perspective on paid delegated childcare. It examines how Vietnamese youths perceive delegated care and how this care arrangement impacts intergenerational family ties and personal identities.

Chapters five and six form something of a dyad, addressing the topic of kinship from two different perspectives. Chapter five considers the role of child care in creating emotional bonds, and the role these emotions play in the kinning process between Vietnamese migrant children and their Czech carers, who over time, usually after their return to their parents', become their Czech grandmothers. Souralová demonstrates convincingly that emotions born in the care relationship are constitutive of the bonds carers develop with migrant children and that they are vital

to understanding how care relationships affect second-generation Vietnamese migrants living in the Czech Republic. Chapter six, on the other hand, focuses on children's attitudes towards Vietnamese grandmothers and 'Grandmotherland' and analyses how being part of a genealogy influences notions of belonging and bonds with the country of origin.

In chapter seven the author concludes that care-giving is 'a formative activity that establishes ties between mothers, nannies, and children whose subjectivities are mutually shaped in the daily practice of care-giving' (p. 139). The ties between mothers and carers are based on the employer–employee relation, and different conceptions of good motherhood regularly clash. Mothers are biologically connected to their children, but the Vietnamese mothers enact their motherhood by providing for their children. Local carers and migrant children develop mutual emotional bonds that gradually grow into ties resembling enacted kinship ties of grandchildren and grandmothers.

This migrant child care monograph is rich in qualitative data, and the author discusses her empirical findings in relation to international care literature throughout the text. There is much to appreciate and reflect on in Souralová's book, and I would like to comment on a few of the issues it describes.

To begin with, there is the fundamental question as to why this phenomenon is occurring. Why do Vietnamese parents delegate child care in this manner? And why do Czech women actively participate in the phenomenon? Why does this care regime operate in the Czech Republic and but not in the US or in other Western European countries with Vietnamese migrant populations? And why do Chinese and Vietnamese migrant entrepreneurs delegate childcare in an almost identical way in Hungary (see Kovács 2018)? As has already been pointed out, Souralová offers her readers much insight into considerations involved in the hiring process, both on the side of the nannies and of the migrant families. She makes reference to Nazli Kibrias's study on Vietnamese families in the US and emphasises that migrants' decisions and strategies are influenced and explained by their 'cultural baggage', i.e. their persistent attempts to reconstruct family life, the way it used to

be in the home country, after their arrival. She has convincingly shown that the hiring decision is an inherent form of family resettlement (p. 15); nevertheless, this cannot be considered to be the only cause. The situations in which these care relations occur seem inseparable from the socio-economic historical context of ex-socialist East Central Europe and the entrepreneurial model that Vietnamese and Chinese migrant entrepreneurs, both male and female, have developed there. As regards the carers, their involvement and subjective motivations to become nannies are explained by their individual biographies in much detail. The economic motives are presented, but they are given a somewhat secondary role by the author, and one may wonder whether carers build these narratives of care-giving, or 'caring biographies', in order to, among others, create a positive image of themselves. The cases presented in the volume without a doubt represent successful cases of delegated child care where emotional bonding and subsequent kinning between carer and child occurred. However, one may wonder: are there cases that do not follow the same path at all?

The methodology section in Souralová's introductory chapter makes brief references to the challenges Souralová faced in her attempt to collect sensitive personal information from first-generation Vietnamese migrant entrepreneur mothers with limited Czech language skills during her fieldwork. Even when one enlists the help of an interpreter, the workload of Vietnamese (and Chinese; see Kovács 2018) entrepreneurs and their socio-culturally conditioned norms for the communication of personal information hamper the obtainment of qualitative data during fieldwork. The data in the book that was obtained from second-generation migrants appears to be richer in detail. According to Appendix 1, Souralová interviewed children and young adults aged 16–25 who told her about their delegated care experiences from the past. On the other hand, two of the chapters (two and three) open with quotes from an eight-year old Vietnamese child who does not figure among her interviewees. Souralová collected a great deal of data in her years of fieldwork, during which she met young Vietnamese children (including the eight-year-old interviewee cited by her) and her methodology section

could have referred to how young children's data was used in the book. The author states that she intentionally did not include fathers in her research, as it was relations between carers and mothers that she wanted to trace. On the one hand, I think the inclusion of the fathers' views would have given more dimension to the Vietnamese migrant entrepreneur families' hiring decisions, but on the other hand – based on a parallel research among Chinese entrepreneurs in Hungary – convincing the fathers to participate in the research project would have been even more difficult.

Parenting norms and strategies have changed rapidly over the past decades in Asian countries, and differ significantly, not only according to geographical region and settlement type, but according to parents' social class and level of education as well. Changes that are happening in Chinese parenting styles also vary according to these factors. It would have been interesting to see, in the discussion of the mothering approaches of Vietnamese migrant women, whether and how their strategies vary according to their level of education, social class, and the type of settlement they were raised in.

New Perspectives on Mutual Dependency in Care-Giving represents an important contribution to several areas of migration scholarship. Souralová demonstrates excellently how care-giving can establish ties of intimacy and emotionality, and how it may lead to a kinning process. With its focus on migrant children's experiences of delegated childcare in the host country, it discusses transnational migrant family life from an innovative perspective. These unique reversed cases, where the care service buyers are migrants and the service providers are locals, open up alternative ways of thinking about delegated child care. It is also one of the few rich, in-depth studies of (South) East Asian immigration and the integration of migrants in Central Europe.

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