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— SPECIAL SECTION —

Thinking Beyond the Centuries of Neglect: Diaspora and Democratic Processes in the Context of Ukraine

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Introduction

In the last decades, the world of democracy and cross-border mobility has been experiencing a historic sea change, one that is taking us away from the nation state-based model of democracy and diaspora of past times towards a form of mutual alignment with no borders and frontlines (Keane 2018). Many of the 'hot topics' in international relations and migration research such as transnationalism, deterritorialisation, citizenship and voting rights, European disintegration, migration crises, the rise of terrorism and global security threats, all challenging the 'container model' of the nation state, are linked today to larger questions of democracy, democratic development, and the actors involved. Transnationalism, as a theoretical and conceptual tool to capture processes and links across administrative and political borders (Glick-Schiller *et al.* 1992), fits the study of diaspora and its involvement in democratic processes in a world where improved modes of transportation as well as new means of modern telecommunications have shortened the social distance between sending and receiving states.

In his attempt to describe a history of the 20th century, Charles S. Maier (2000) preferred to focus on space rather than time to track what he refers to as one of 'the most encompassing or fundamental socio-political trends of modern world development', principally the emerging 'crisis of territoriality' (Maier 2000: 807). This crisis is not meant to suggest that territory has been eroded or is in decline, but rather that the way we understand bounded territory, principally in the form of a state, can no longer be assumed to be a self-contained spatial unit that organises our political, economic or social lives. To cite one example, Maier (2016: 830) suggests that 'those who aspire to use political resources to mitigate market inequalities will have to do so on a post-territorial basis, or, at the least, on different scales of territorial space'. Put differently, addressing the inequalities of wealth distribution requires a method that extends beyond bounded territorial space, beyond, in today's division of space, the nation-state, and considers instead a post-territorial or transnational vision of the

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market. The sense of the crisis of territoriality advanced by Maier (2016) orients the research presented in this section; we recognise the delocalising power of diasporic networks, of media technologies and space-time compression, while also acknowledging the continued potency of territory to define identity, nationality and, crucially, to act as a home for particular political systems.

The collection of papers in this section aims to overcome the territorial bias that shapes democratic thinking and underpins diaspora scholarship (particularly diaspora engagement with democratic processes and its potential and contribution to democratic change) and to propose a deterritorial vision of both these elements. Having the Ukrainian case study at its centre, this section asks how the modern perspective of dispersal offers a useful way to conceptualise diaspora, while examining how the modern diaspora activity enables diasporas to influence the processes of democratisation in their homeland. In this section we seek to probe how various actors and groups, located across territorial space, can affect political systems and, more specifically, influence democratic processes. In that sense, this section is driven by a post-territorial vision of politics and democratisation processes that privilege networks of affiliation and organising, rather than geographically-bound political movements. It focuses on the nexus between one form of displacement, diaspora, and a particular political system, democracy, to provide insights into how the former might impact democratic processes. Specifically, this section explores that nexus principally in relation to the role of the multifaceted Ukrainian diaspora and their efforts to get involved in the democratic processes and democracy building in contemporary Ukraine.

Diaspora, democracy and territory: rethinking the nexus

Of particular concern to this section is the vision of 'territorial mentality' that seems to underpin studies of diaspora and democracy (Keane 2018). Territory is a central component or is perceived as a necessary precursor for democracy to take shape (Keane 2009; Merkel 2014) and for diaspora to intrinsically link community to the space outside of their natal (or imagined natal) country (Cohen 2008). Indeed, as Therborn highlights, all 'politics begins with place' (Therborn 2013: 509) and, as Maier elaborates, it is within territories that decisions are made, or as he states, 'territory is thus a *decision space*. It establishes the spatial reach of legislation … collective decisions' (2016: 3) and of politics (2016: 6). And yet studies of democracy, a form of political governance, have offered little reflection on its territorial dimension (Oleinikova 2019). A significant reason for this neglect, according to Cara Nine, is that 'democratic theory is exclusive to persons' located in a fixed geographical space, addressing 'how [these people] should be treated and how their associations should be organised' (Nine 2012: 93), all the while 'ignoring' how a fixed territorial space anchors and circumscribes our understanding of democracy (Nine 2006: 101). Even in more recent attempts to ameliorate the marginalisation of territory in democracy research, it is people and their co-habitation that remains the focus. For instance, in his 2016 examination of a political approach to understanding the development of democracy, David Miller hypothetically asks, considering 'the set of people who occupy the area defined by mooted boundary B, is it possible to create a well-functioning democracy within the area so defined?' (Miller 2016: 40). This is one of the core questions that drive our research in this section. Using diaspora as the lens through which to wrestle with the issue is highly appropriate because unlike democracy, theories of dispersal have, at times unwittingly, engaged significantly with territory, and attempted to account for the ways various transnationally located social and political movements have contended with borders and fixed geographical spaces (Anderson 1998). The reason for this high-level engagement stems both from the meaning of diaspora, as a form of dispersal from a set territorial space, and the timing of its emergence as a field of scholarly enquiry. Diasporas, as Bayeh (2019) suggests, are non-state-based political groups that can 'escape' or transcend boundaries, work and connect across them, stemming from macropolitical structures such as the bounded state. Regarding its etymology, 'diaspora' derives from the Ancient Greek verb speirō 'to scatter' and the preposition

dia 'through or over'. As Judith Shuval argues, 'a critical component' of diaspora is that it entails a 'history of dispersal' and a 'collective … cultural memory of the dispersion' (Shuval 2000: 43). What is often said to have been scattered or dispersed are metaphorical seeds, which highlights the intrinsic reference to land and territory contained in the term. Historically, Robin Cohen (1997) distinguished five types of diasporas, one of which is deterritorial diaspora, as not connected with an actually existing state, but rather an imagined/symbolic homeland, such as the Roma or Kurds. Safran (1991) likewise pointed out this characteristic (a common memory about the place of origin which could be an imagined one, as it was for centuries in the case of Jews or Armenians).

In his summary of current approaches to diaspora, Cohen (1997: 135–136) suggests that 'diasporas are positioned somewhere between "nation-states" and "travelling cultures" in that they involve dwelling in a nation-state in a physical sense, but travelling in an astral or spiritual sense that falls outside the nation-state's space/time zone'. In this line Cohen (2008) sees that theorising diaspora should begin by looking at the cases of people who live outside their place of origin rather than using a particular theory already established to portray them. Diaspora has been transformed (at least in a theoretical sense) from a descriptive condition applied largely to Jews in exile, to encompass a multitude of ethnic, religious and national communities who find themselves living outside of the territory to which they are historically 'rooted'. This also points to the widely held assumption that diasporas are dispersed from a particular place or originary site. While this has been comprehensively debated within diaspora studies, some arguing against the importance of the territorial centre (Bayeh 2019; Hepp and Couldry 2009; Gamlen 2019) and others asserting its enduring relevance (Zielonka 2017), the significance of geographical space and land remains ever present and is inescapable within this field.

Another reason for the deep engagement with geographical space, related to the emergence of diaspora studies, is equally significant especially as it reveals of the kind of territory that seems to interest or orient diaspora research. It can be argued that even though 'state/country of origin', 'home', 'homeland' are frequently used in the diaspora literature, often what is more than likely implied is the nation-state. Mishra (2006) highlights this point in his important study *Diaspora Criticism*. He argues that of 'the many supplementary terms that swirl in the orbit of diaspora criticism (hybridity, décalage, discontinuity, multilocality, nomadism, double consciousness and so on)' transnationalism and nationalism feature as the most prominent (Mishra 2006: 131). Like Mishra, Jana Braziel and Anita Mannur contend that the nation is a key component in what they refer to as the practice of 'theorising' diaspora (Braziel and Mannur 2003: 3–4, 7–10). What, however, is curious about the importance of the nation-state is not just its unquestioned frequency, but that nation-states, which emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries, post-date the occurrence of diaspora communities by, one could argue from the perspective of the Jewish or Greek diasporas, thousands of years. In light of this disjointed sequence of timing, what explains the centrality of the nation in diaspora research?

The answer to this can be traced to the timing of the emergence of diaspora studies as opposed to diaspora communities. Braziel and Mannur argue that the increased interest in diaspora research dates from 1991, with the inauguration of the journal *Diaspora*. Since then 'debates over the theoretical, cultural, and historical resonances of the term [diaspora] have proliferated in academic journals devoted to ethnic, national and (trans) national concerns' (Braziel and Mannur 2003: 2). This was reinforced more recently by Girish Daswani and Ato Quayson in their introduction to *A Companion to Diaspora and Trasnationalism*. They write that with the *Diaspora* journal 'the field progressively acquired scholarly coherence with a visible set of debates and practitioners' (Quayson and Daswani 2013: 7). In other words, the institutionalised diaspora scholarship is a relatively contemporary field of inquiry. Tölölyan (1991: 4) highlights that 'dispersions, while not altogether new in form, acquired a different meaning by the nineteenth century, in the context of the triumphant nation-state'. The appeal of the nation-state in the last several decades has not waned (Brubaker 2009) and, according to

Massey, there has been an intense reconsolidation of the nation-state since the 1980s (Massey *et al.* 1994: 4). This is evident in the rise of exclusivist claims to territorial space, especially in the form of reactionary nationalisms opposed to new migrants and processes of globalisation (Massey *et al.* 1994: 4, 151). Such claims of exclusivity are even more pronounced in a post-9/11 milieu where states have strengthened their own powers in terms of homeland and border security in a bid to curtail the influx of undesirable and supposedly threatening outsiders. Thus, the displacement of people, especially in a context where the nation-state is being reconsolidated, means that diaspora studies need to be understood as interacting with and even defining itself against nationhood.

According to Maier, territory is not just a 'decision space' but is also simultaneously 'constituted as an identity space or a space of belonging'. Territory specifies the 'domain of powerful collective loyalties' which is evidenced by how 'political and often ethnic allegiances' are supposedly 'territorial' (Maier 2016: 3). The notion of territory as both an 'identity' and 'decision' space resonates closely with the concept of the nation-state, where the nation is seen to reflect a common if not ethnic then cultural identity, and the state represents the geographical limits of legislation formation, political decision making and sovereignty. But Maier, like so many diaspora theorists, has noted that the affiliations between territory, identity and decision-making, or between the state, nation and democracy, are not congruent – 'Identity space and decision space have diverged' (Maier 2016: 3). For democracy research this has significant implications, aside from the assumption of territory as a necessary site for democracy to take shape as mentioned above. Democracy scholarship has noted but also criticised the idea that the success of democracy is contingent upon the inhabitants of a democratic space sharing a common identity. As Carl Schmitt argued almost a century ago, 'Democracy requires … first homogeneity and second – if the need arises – elimination or eradication of heterogeneity' (Schmitt 1988: 9). Eliminating heterogeneity at odds with democracy, as noted by Seyla Benhabib who attempts in her article *Democracy and Identity* to address the perplexities of these two terms, 'of the tensions between the universalistic principles ushered in by the American and French Revolutions and particularistic identities of nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, race and language' that cohabit the same democratic territorial space (1998: 85). Benhabib develops a typology of identity/difference movements to address this concern, a concern that had particular urgency after the political transition in CEE countries due to the '1989 decline of superpower polarism and the end of the Cold War [which] have bought with them a dizzying reconfiguration of the map of Europe' (1998: 86). Her study focuses on identities within nation-states and how the development of a civic polity can help to accommodate difference within democracy. Benhabib's understanding of cultures as heterogeneous, dynamic, porous, hybrid, and as communities of dialogue fraught with power, helps to explore how diverse and dispersed communities interact with power institutions and influence the democratic processes. This section benefits from the questions raised by scholars like Benhabib, but approaches the complexity of geographical space, territory, identity and democratic decision-making from a diasporic view-point to ask how does a geographically dispersed national community shape and influence democratic processes. The 'dizzying reconfiguration of the map of Europe', although initiated three decades ago in 1989, remains a prime site to propose this investigation, with a particular focus on Ukraine as a fledgling democracy that has suffered many shocks in the post-Cold War era, and is a nation that is affected and shaped by a high coefficient of dispersal and diaspora.

Why Ukraine?

27 years of Ukraine's independence and the recent Euromaidan protests showed Ukraine to be a state poised between East and West European paths, with a long connection to Russia in the East. Ukraine's search for its identity and future is deeply rooted in historical fractures, indicated by its longstanding ties beyond its borders,

which have shifted many times. All these years since independence Ukraine has been struggling to become a successful democracy, developing an active civil society and fighting the corruption, oligarchisation of power, and nepotism that undermine Ukraine's democratic efforts. Diaspora communities have played an important role in this struggle, shaping the democratic Ukraine from abroad through international media, the transnational roots of memory and the search for collective identity, and transnational linkages of elites within Ukrainian political and economic regimes. Having established themselves as active agents of democratic transition, galvanising the transnational interest-based politics promoting democracy, expanding claim-making from their local to national, supranational, and global levels of engagement between their states of residence and Ukraine, Ukrainian diasporas have become a bridge to Western knowledge, expertise, resources, opportunities, global markets – all that operate beyond the territory, time, and space of a nation-state – and at a most efficient deep level, help to root the democratic change 'inside' Ukraine (Oleinikova and Bayeh 2019). With a sizable proportion of the population living outside the country and transnational embeddedness that has unexpectedly intensified in the Russian-Ukrainian political conflict, Ukraine makes a suitable case to examine and understand the relationship between democratic processes and diaspora, and the potential of the latter for democratic change.

The case of Ukraine with a high coefficient of dispersal and diaspora teaches us empirically and theoretically to think of diaspora and democracy as post-territorial phenomena, because Ukraine's democratic development has happened not just inside but from abroad (from its diaspora) and entailed confronting questions about Ukraine's position in the European region, challenging the idea that an independent Ukraine must be a territorially bound and nationally exclusivist entity (Oleinikova 2019). The case of Ukraine shows us that territory matters but so does connectivity between the diaspora and Ukraine, where the functioning of the dispersed communities has made promising strides over the last decade, playing an important role in the emergence of the Euromaidan protests in 2013/2014 and continuing to remain vibrant since. While democracy often means electoral politics and voting, and can refer to government systems and principles of popular sovereignty, in this section under 'democracy' we mean not only a set of democratic systems and principles, but also the development of a way of life committed to greater equality and the public accountability of authorities that rests on history, civil society, shared memory, and diaspora communities and their involvement that accelerates various structural shifts in contemporary Ukraine.

There are *two main reasons* why Ukraine is important for understanding the complexity of territory, identity and democratic decision-making from a diasporic viewpoint.

The *first main reason* lies in its importance for the future of Europe. Ukraine is transnationally embedded, with a highly globalised diaspora which is involved in Ukraine's democratisation efforts via not only direct financial help to pro-democracy groups and NGOs, but also by direct human resource transfers in the form of diaspora members relocating to Ukraine to occupy positions in Ukrainian government (see details in Klavdia Tatar's contribution). These efforts contribute to shaping Ukraine's West European path and Ukraine's democratic success, which is of geopolitical strategic importance for the future of Europe.

The Euromaidan protests of 2013–2014 and their ambivalent aftermath underscored why and how Ukraine remains a state between the East and West European pathways. Ukraine was largely invisible to the European Union and the rest of the West in the first decade of its independence. Relations were based on the vague EU–Ukraine Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1998 (similar accords were offered to all post-Soviet states). None of the then 15 EU members at the time saw Ukraine as a priority. It was too far away from the EU, too difficult to understand, and too close to Russia. Ukraine appeared on the 'European' political radar screen with the EU enlargement in 2004. Especially after Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution brought a pro-Western, democratic-leaning government to power, the EU started to think about a special policy for Ukraine. Since 2013 the activation of Ukraine's fight for its European choice and the war in Eastern Ukraine have reshaped

the geopolitical map of Europe and derailed cooperation between Russia and the West. Of course, the 'West' is a relative notion. The existence of collective sanctions against Russia is empirical evidence that the 'West' exists. It is very significant within the framework of democracy subject matter that the West's solidarity developed as a reaction to Russian aggression against Ukraine. Such reaction and support for Ukraine is a sign of the importance of the current dynamics in Ukraine for Europe and globally. While that laid the foundation for a new (excluding UK) and extended European Union (potentially including Ukraine), a Ukraine–Russia conflict creates the possibility of this construction extending further East. Moreover, the stakes in Ukraine–Russia relations always were, and indeed continue to be, about Russia–Europe relations. Political scholars, observers and international leaders from around the world recognise the global importance of Ukraine's crisis and current fight for democracy (Snyder 2015; Yekelchyk 2015).

The *second reason* why Ukraine is important and is central to this section lies in Ukraine's transnational embeddedness and growing globalisation and post-territoriality (Oleinikova 2020). Modern Ukraine has never been that global before. Ukraine is one of eight countries in the world with the greatest number of people living outside the country's borders ('diaspora') (others being India, Mexico, the Russian Federation, China, Bangladesh, Syrian Arab Republic and Pakistan), as well as being the European country with the largest number of people living in other European countries (5.9 million) (Ahmadov and Sasse 2016). The Ukrainian exodus was a series of mass migrations that mean that today, more than 20 million Ukrainians live outside the country, according to the Toronto-based Ukrainian World Congress (Satzewich 2002). That compares to 39 million still living in Ukraine. Canada and the United States have the largest Ukrainian communities outside the former Soviet Union. Other significant long-standing communities are found in Brazil and Argentina, while more recent migration has put an estimated 500 000 Ukrainians in Poland, 300 000 in Italy and 100 000 in Spain (Oleinikova and Bayeh 2019).

Empirically speaking, the dynamics of diaspora involvement in democratisation efforts in contemporary Ukraine presents something of a maze, containing at its centre normative contradictions as well as theoretical puzzles. As Ukrainian diasporas have become more involved and concerned with the development of their homeland, particularly in the last five years in response to the Euromaidan, this shows that dispersed communities in the digital, spaceless and fluid age (Kozachenko 2019) tend to play a crucial role in the democratisation of the home state and have a global impact. As Kyivans froze on the Maidan in 2013–2014, fighting for their European choice, Ukrainians in diaspora organised small 'Maidans' in their respective inhabited corners of the world. Ukrainians went out into the streets of London, Tokyo, Sydney, New York, Warsaw, and Frankfurt and fought for a wider global response. For example, in Australia, a 40 000-strong Ukrainian community urged the country to impose sanctions on Russia after its annexation of Crimea. The small Ukrainian community in Hong Kong submitted a petition to the Russian consulate, which later informed the embassy in Beijing.

Knowing the mobilisation of Ukrainian diasporas, when hosting the Ukrainian World Forum in Kyiv in August 2016, the former president of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko stressed that Ukrainians all over the world should unite and protect their country (Fedyuk 2019). Sociologists Olga Oleinikova and Jumana Bayeh (2019: 15) aptly pointed out that one of the positive outcomes of the conflict in Ukraine is 'the reinvigoration and reunification of Ukrainians globally'. According to them, the Ukrainian diaspora enhanced its ability to drive actions globally to benefit Ukraine: it lobbied foreign governments, organised protests, collected aid, and informed the world about events in Ukraine.

Despite its global scale, this transnational post-territorial dimension in the Ukrainian context is underexamined; therefore, modern Ukraine appears to be a good laboratory to explore the complexity of territory, identity and democratic processes from a diasporic viewpoint and understand how a geographically dispersed national community shapes and influences democracy formation in the home country. The fact that Ukrainian diasporas play a significant part in the country's affairs provides a demonstration of a diaspora's interaction

with its country that challenges the relevance of the self-contained unit to organise our political, economic or social lives, mentioned above. Taking Ukraine as an example, the papers in this section discuss and showcase the empirical evidence of how a geographically dispersed national community acts beyond the territory of residence and has capacity to mobilise politically from afar to influence democratic formation.

Special Section overview

Building on the critique of the existing scholarly preoccupation with territory and exploring how we can move beyond its gravitational force to anchor democracy, the papers in this issue push democratic theory and diaspora studies beyond the boundaries of territory, time and space, by rethinking the old themes and developing new perspectives. The new ideas and perspectives presented in the papers are driven by two main standpoints:

- recognition of the post-territorial dimension of democracy, multiple spaces of belonging, networks and transnational political involvement (action);
- understanding of transnational embeddedness, global dispersal connections and democratic potential of diasporas: the power of the dispersed national community to shape and influence democracy formation from afar.

Ukraine and Greece – Two Diasporas: Engagement and Disengagement with the Homeland at Times of Crisis, by Foteini Kalantzi and Iryna Lapshyna, is the first in line to challenge the orthodox understanding of diaspora and democracy, as being attached to territory and space. Kalantzi and Lapshyna posit a modern perspective on dispersal and offer a new way to conceptualise diaspora. Their paper maps the various ways diaspora has been traditionally understood and tracks the tensions evident between orthodox and more progressive approaches to dispersal. They propose a deterrorialised form of diaspora, where diasporas are approached as actors rather than objects of state policy, which is an attempt both to recognise the homeland mobilising effects to 'diaspora' and to critique the particular ways in which diasporas engage or disengage in the modern globalised world. Kalantzi and Lapshyna explore how the new forms of diaspora engagement and disengagement are an avenue through which to examine delocalised processes of democratisation.

The next contribution, *Helping the Homeland in Troubled Times: Advocacy by Canada's Ukrainian Diaspora in the Context of Regime Change and War in Ukraine*, by Klavdia Tatar, analyses the diaspora diplomacy (the case of the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada), that includes advocating and lobbying for the interests of the homeland with the governments of host countries and international organisations. It is argued to constitute an important way by which diasporas influence the processes of democratisation. The paper analyses the recent changes in Ukraine, starting from Ukraine's independence and accelerated by the Euromaidan uprising, and continuing to the present day's fragile ceasefire and low implementation of reforms in Ukraine. Throughout, the Ukrainian diaspora has been an influential fighter for the country's better future. In this respect, the paper presents the context for the possible active involvement of diasporas in Ukraine.

Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Ukraine and Greece – Two Diasporas: Engagement and Disengagement with the Homeland at Times of Crisis

Foteini Kalantzi*◉, Iryna Lapshyna*◉

This article focuses on the interrelationship between homeland and diaspora at times of crisis. It adopts a comparative lens to look into diasporic (dis)engagement with the homeland, specifically analysing the cases of Greece and Ukraine. The main research issues are how crises affect the engagement between homeland and diaspora – taking Greece and Ukraine as case studies – and which the defining contextual factors are that transform the diaspora engagement. The article unpacks the homeland–diaspora nexus concerning two states with different socio-political backgrounds, both going through severe political and economic crises. In so doing, the article gives prominence to the differentiation between the engagement of the two different diasporas with their home countries at times of crisis. Evidence suggests substantial engagement in the Ukrainian case while, in the Greek case, a more mixed attitude – leaning towards disengagement – is apparent.

Keywords: diaspora, diasporic engagement, homeland, Greece, Ukraine, crisis

Introduction

Diaspora has continued hand-in-hand with the progress of human history. Nevertheless, it has become increasingly fascinating to explore the developments of diasporic communities and their interrelation with the homeland under the prism of globalisation, revolutionary technologies and transnationalism. This has also become obvious in the development of diaspora studies, where a burgeoning literature focuses on the relation between states and their diasporas.

Admittedly, in recent years, there has been an increasing interest in diaspora, with the last decade seeing a wave of diaspora-themed publications and reports. The popularity of these studies is not purely due to academic interest but also results from changes in migration patterns and dynamics in ways that facilitate diaspora engagement. The negative perceptions of migration from poor regions to wealthier countries have been reassessed in recent years. There is also an increasing recognition of the ongoing transnational linkages between

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migrants and their home countries, which has triggered new interest in the role of these diasporas in development (Bakewell 2009). The advances in scholarship demonstrate that 'diaspora capital' (Kotabe, Riddle, Sonderegger and Arun Täube 2013: 3) – human, social and financial – may be a useful development resource for migrant-sending countries.

Furthermore, there has been a growing discussion on the reconceptualisation of the prominence of the nation state as a primary actor in the international system. It has even been argued that the nation state has not only been reconfigured by the new transnational actors and innovative communication technologies but has also been eroded (Appadurai 1996). However, even if there is any doubt about the primacy of the nation state, it is still a major reference point when talking about diasporas. As Brubaker (2005: 11) argues '…even if the metaphysics of the nation-state as a territorial community may have been overcome; but the metaphysics of "community" and "identity" remain'. The imperceptible thread defining and connecting states and diasporas is identity. Transnationalism and cosmopolitan citizenship do not necessarily translate into migrants' absence of a strong connection with the homeland whilst also belonging to other communities.

Most importantly, the element that defines the importance of diaspora is the creation of transnational communities and networks facilitated by improved technological advancements (e.g. the Internet) and lower transportation costs. Apart from the increasing ease of creating networks, the new transnational standards have given people the ability to live and function in more than one place. People can belong to and feel connected with more than one country and create economic and social networks there. Additionally, there is a growing awareness of the importance of economic remittances.

Within this context of the growing interest in diaspora and the transformations taking place regarding migration, this article focuses on the interrelationship between homeland and diaspora in times of crisis. The existing scholarship focuses mostly on two goals, namely the interrelation of diasporas with the homeland in cases of conflict and violent crises on the one hand and of democratisation on the other. There is scarce literature about the middle space – namely about the ways in which diasporas relate to their democratic homelands when in distress.

The article adopts a comparative lens through which to look into diasporic (dis)engagement with the homeland. The main research issues are how crises affect the engagement between homeland and diaspora – taking Greece and Ukraine as case studies – and which the defining contextual factors are that transform diaspora engagement. This article thus unpacks the homeland–diaspora nexus concerning two states with different socio-political backgrounds, both going through severe political and economic crises. In so doing, the article gives prominence to the differentiation between the engagement of the two different diasporas with their home countries in times of crisis. The three main analytical elements are, firstly, scrutiny of the engagement between homeland and diaspora at times of economic and political crisis, secondly observation of the crisis as a threshold event and, thirdly, a focus on two democratic countries – Greece and Ukraine. The last point needs to be underlined with regards to its contribution to the diaspora scholarship, which usually focuses on the role of crises as threshold events in conflict, post-conflict and non- or semi-democratic contexts.

Theoretical background

The state–diaspora interrelationship

According to Cohen (2008: 35), 'we are now long past the stage where the meaning of diaspora can be confined to a description of the forcible of a people and their subsequent unhappiness, or supposed unhappiness, in their

countries of exile'. We endorse Grossmann's approach, where diaspora is viewed as 'a transnational community whose members share a number of attributes such as dispersal or immigration, location outside a homeland, community orientation to a homeland, transnationalism and group identity' (Grossmann 2019: 1267).

The relationship between state and diaspora is defined by an element of plasticity, as it is transforming over time. The distinctive character of this relationship is shaped by the multiplicity of factors (the economic and political climate in both host and home countries, the organisational profile of diasporic communities, the ties between host and home countries, identity issues, etc.) and actors (homeland institutions, citizens in the homeland, diasporic communities, host countries, etc.). The transnational linkage between states and their diasporas can be viewed and analysed through different prisms. State–diaspora relations can be observed through the lens of what Anderson (1998) called 'long-distance nationalism', whereby diasporic communities have the ability and the willingness to participate in the politics (and in many cases the conflicts) of their homelands. Other analysts observe this relationship as a 'part of the emergence of emancipatory post-national, supranational and transnational forms of citizenship' (Delano and Gamlen 2014: 45). Brinkerhoff (2008) puts identity at the epicentre of her analysis of mobilisation strategies. She argues that identity and psychological reasons play a significant role in their 'constructive' or 'destructive' contribution to their homeland. New transnational players have also emerged – such as hometown associations created by immigrants who wish to offer support to their home places, preserve bonds with local communities and keep a sense of community (Orozco and Garcia-Zanello 2009).

Looking at the other side of the coin, in many cases homeland governments design policies in order to engage with their diasporas and mobilise them for different purposes. According to Østergaard-Nielsen (2003: 769), the main reason why home countries mobilise their diaspora is to obtain economic or political support through remittances and lobbying. Collyer (2013: xv), says that the motives of a state to engage with its emigrants can include, for example, the 'expected economic benefits from remittances, investment, know-how etc., foreign policy relations with emigrants' host states as well as political support among domestic constituencies that are ideologically committed to ethnic nationhood or socially linked to emigrant communities'. Turkish governments, for example, have employed methods for investment, extended political rights and academic exchanges – i.e. sponsorship of academic chairs (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003: 769), while the Indian government uses a mechanism – the 'Resurgent India bonds' – to raise capital from the Indian diaspora (Chander 2001). Chander (2001: 1014) states that 'Diaspora Bonds represent an important mechanism by which poor nations can tap the wealth of their relatively rich diasporas'. Before India introduced this mechanism, State of Israel bonds engaged in relations with its diaspora in the same way (*ibidem*: 1064). Levitt and La Dehesa (2003) have exemplified – through the cases of Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Brazil and Haiti – the ways in which sending states have shifted their policies towards communities living abroad to ensure that the migrants keep a lasting long-distance relationship with the homeland. Gamlen (2019: 15) argues that 'the recent global spread of diaspora institutions is a particular kind of socially scripted action: states are establishing diaspora institutions in conformity with international models and best practices for sharing responsibility over migration'.

There is a substantial amount of literature focusing on the paths via which states engage with their diaspora for developmental purposes. Studies usually try to unpack the interrelationship between diasporas and their less-advanced homelands with weak economies (Brinkerhoff 2008; de Haas 2006; Ionescu 2006; Kapur 2004; Newland and Patrick 2004; Van Hear, Pieke and Vertovec 2004). It has been argued that remittances constitute a factor of poverty reduction (Newland and Patrick 2004) although it is also said that they are not the sole influence on poverty in home countries. Diasporas also provide foreign direct investment (FDI), have a positive impact on markets, facilitate technology transfer, are a source of tourism and philanthropy and make political

contributions. Finally, diasporas facilitate the transfer of knowledge, attitudes and culture (Newland and Patrick 2004).

The homeland–diaspora nexus at times of socio-economic and political crisis

Diasporas often respond to various economic, political and social crises affecting them or their compatriots. Much is written on the role of the diaspora towards their homelands that face ethnic or civic conflicts, are divided and have fragile democracies. In some cases, the effects of diasporas' involvement, for example, through radicalisation can be negative on domestic conflicts (Adamson 2005; Kaldor 2001; Koinova 2011) and positive when diasporas act as agents of peace (Baser and Swain 2008). Østergaard-Nielsen (2006) points to the 'dark side of diaspora politics', whereby diasporas, such as the Irish, Ethiopians or Turkish-Cypriots, might not accept compromises, as this is part of their exile identity. Diasporas have been criticised for their contribution in financing extremist movements and promoting conflict in the homeland. On the other hand, there are several cases where diasporas have contributed to peace-building by assisting in processes of conflict transformation and engaging in activities aimed at post-conflict reconstruction (Østergaard-Nielsen 2006: 11). In fact, according to Van Hear (2015: 18) 'there has been a shift in perception from ascribing to diasporas a negative influence in supporting conflict (as "peace-wreckers") to the more positive view that diasporas can assist with relief, peace building, recovery and post-conflict reconstruction (as "peace-makers" or "peace-builders")'.

Even though there is some remaining scepticism about diasporas' capacity to help the homeland at times of crisis (Antwi-Boateng 2012; Carter 2005; Cochrane 2007), themes like the growing role of diasporas in development, diaspora mobilisation, diaspora engagement or the contribution of diasporas at times of crisis, prevail in academic and public debate. Furthermore, diasporas engage in civic activism in cases of disasters, whether natural or caused by humans, in the homeland (Koinova 2017). In some cases – and especially in social and humanitarian crises – diasporic communities and individuals coordinate their efforts to offer relief to their origin countries. Diasporas have the capacity to respond quickly and in a targeted manner, using their knowledge and familiarity with the homeland at a social, political and economic level (Kalantzi 2020). For example, diaspora Peruvians, mainly in the USA, mobilised during the El Niño disaster to support their home country (Paerregaard 2010). As we have recently observed, diasporas can also mobilise quickly in a humanitarian crisis. During the Covid-19 pandemic, diasporas were perceived as partners in supporting the authorities tackling the crisis. Diaspora actors have channelled their efforts to assist their homeland with medical equipment, financial resources and advisory support (Kalantzi 2020). Dag (2020), for example, has shown the positive impact which Kurdish diaspora associations have had in diminishing the effect of Covid-19 on their people in the countries of origin. Bashair (2020), too, found that health professionals from Armenia and Sudan share their expertise with diaspora colleagues. The Greek diaspora has launched a fundraising campaign, the 'THI Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund', to raise donations from Greeks and Philhellenes in the diaspora to support the country's public health system, entrepreneurs and vulnerable people (*National Herald* 2020).

Diaspora engagement thus alternates depending on the specific socio-political circumstances and the contextual factors of the crisis, as we are demonstrating in this article. We point to the fact that we need to look at the diaspora as an ever-transformative agency depending on its structural constituents. The special contribution of this piece is to add to the solidified understanding that the role of diasporas cannot be placed in a normative framework but only analysed from a transnational perspective, affected by a variety of actors, agendas and goals. It also scrutinises the transnational character of the diaspora's actions, which have the dynamic to influence political and economic developments in the homeland.

Furthermore, the interaction between homeland and diasporas in unstable and conflictual political contexts, where internal or external sovereignty is under threat, has been covered extensively in the diaspora scholarship; however, there is a research and analytical void about stable political contexts. This is particularly useful to the diaspora scholarship, as there is a gap in the literature and research on the interaction of homelands and diasporas at times of crisis – particularly economic and political – in democratic countries. This article adds to the expansion of the theorisation on diasporas who reside in liberal states which engage with homelands not experiencing any challenges to their sovereignty (Koinova 2010: 164).

Through the comparative research that this article offers, we shed light on the diaspora engagement of two countries with different socio-political backgrounds although sharing commonalities in the way in which the homeland addresses diasporic issues. We also highlight the different ways in which the two diasporas reacted to their homeland crisis. Hence, the article fills an existing research gap in the diaspora literature that addresses – through a comparative lens – the interrelationship between homeland and diaspora and the causes for the intensification or weakening of the engagement in these two democratic countries under economic stress or political crisis. It also confirms previous research results whereby diasporas have linkages to different contexts and where their embeddedness in these contexts shapes their mobilisations (Koinova 2018).

In addition, the article enhances the discussion on the role of context and temporality for diaspora engagement, particularly when crises occur. Transformative events[1] have the capacity to alter the way in which diaspora mobilisations are evolving (Koinova 2018) and, in some cases even, like the Kashmiri diaspora in Britain, diasporas emerge in response to specific events (Sökefeld 2006) and crises might increase diasporas' mobilisation (Godin 2018). On the contrary, diasporas might not have the means or the motivation to assist their homeland at times of crisis, in contrast to assumptions related to long-distance nationalism and emotional attachment, as Mavroudi (2018) exemplifies with the Greek and Palestinian cases. Other factors that might counteract any motivation to engage with the homeland are frustration, anger, fatigue or contempt (Shain and Barth 2003).

While we can observe a growing body of literature on crises as social phenomena, not enough attention has been paid to re-conceptualising crises as social phenomena in contexts beyond the 'West' (Resende, Budrytė and Buhari-Gulmez 2018). A growing body of scholarship on the Ukrainian diaspora has begun to highlight its response to the Euromaidan movement, including diaspora mobilisation and the influence of diaspora agents (Kolyada and Raicheva 2018; Lapshyna 2019; Malyutina 2014; Melnyk, Patalong, Plottka and Steinberg 2016; Nikolko 2019), the involvement of Ukrainian modern diasporas in shaping democracy from a distance (Oleinikova and Bayeh 2020), the political agency of Ukrainian 'migrant youth' and differences between new and established migrants (Kovalchuk and Korzh 2020), the Ukrainian diaspora use of social media for political activity (Fedyuk 2020) and diasporic nation-building (Kozachenko 2018). As in our findings, Dunin-Wąsowicz and Fomina (2020), who looked at Poland as a case study, argued that the events of 2013/14 were an unprecedented catalyst for the formation of Ukrainian diasporic civil society. It is important, therefore, to address the theoretical and conceptual implications of the diaspora–homeland nexus at time of crisis in order to be able to unpack the relationship between context and agency and to understand the dynamics behind the diaspora's engagement or disengagement from the homeland.

Methodology

This contribution focuses on empirical studies of the Greek and Ukrainian diasporas. We consider Greece, an EU country, and Ukraine, a non-EU country, together with two different types of crisis, one economic and one political, both of which have suffered severe economic repercussions recently. Along with these cases we discuss how a crisis, defined as a major 'threshold event', affected both countries' diasporas.

We explore the mobilisation of the Ukrainian and Greek diasporas and examine how they (dis)engage and contribute economically, socially, politically and culturally to their respective homelands. In addition, we analyse how contexts shape this activism and look at the links which diasporas have with their home and host states and with the different actors. The Ukrainian data are based on the project: *Do Diasporas Matter? Exploring the Potential Role of Diaspora in the UK and Poland in the Reform and Post-War Reconstruction of Ukraine*, which was funded by the British Academy. This study is based on material resulting from a 12-month period of data collection from 2015 to 2016 and from 43 in-depth semi-structured interviews, field observations and a literature survey. Purposive sampling was selected as a strategy for choosing the participants for this study. The interviews were conducted mostly in London and Warsaw and lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. The research complied with the ESRC Framework for research ethics guidelines (2015). The material was anonymised, coded and analysed using NVivo software. Representatives of diverse Ukrainian diaspora organisations, community leaders, business people, activists and volunteers were interviewed.

Regarding the Greek case, the discourse analysis was conducted based on the scrutiny of debates in the Greek parliament between 2009 and 2018, which provided some background information about the interrelationship between the homeland and the diaspora. In addition, the meticulous study of the reports of the Special Permanent Committee on Greeks Abroad, which also coordinates the activities of the parliament with the Council of Hellenes Abroad, provided us with more in-depth information about the problems that the diaspora is facing – e.g. the closure of Greek schools abroad or the political participation – through voting – of Greeks abroad. Moreover, our study is based on extensive secondary research on the Greek diaspora. Specifically, we used findings from the on-going research of the Greek Diaspora Project in South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX), which gave us important information about new diaspora's mobility and the modes of the Greek diaspora's engagement with the homeland. We also used data from the EUMIGRE project,[2] which gave us background information about the new Greek emigration. We also used research results and discussions emanating from papers presented at the conference entitled *Homeland–Diaspora Relations in Flux: Greece and Greeks Abroad at Times of Crisis*, which took place at the University of Oxford in June 2018. There, academics and specialists on the Greek diaspora gathered to engage in dialogue concerning the interaction between Greece and its diaspora. Conducting secondary research, we found that most of the papers written about the new Greek diaspora focused on institutional failures (Cavounidis 2016; Frangos 2019), insufficient support by institutions (Mavroudi 2018), the barriers that emigrants encountered in order to engage with the homeland, such as corruption (Papangelopoulos and Merkle 2019) and bureaucracy (Mavroudi 2018) and the absence of the diaspora's moral responsibility (Pratsinakis, Kafe and Serôdio 2020) despite the emotional connectedness (Christou 2011; Pratsinakis *et al.* 2020) and the great potential of the Greek diaspora to economically support Greece (Hugo and Bakalis 2014).

Regarding our methodological framework, we acknowledge the limitations posed by using different data[3] and employing different methods for analysing our two case countries and their diasporas' engagement with the homeland. However, both methodologies share commonalities, such as extensive secondary analysis and the scrutiny of statements, interviews and conference presentations. Note, too, that both research methods include the views of 'diaspora entrepreneurs'. Additionally, the findings of our research strongly suggest the Ukrainian diaspora's engagement while, in the Greek case, a more mixed attitude leans towards disengagement – a result confirmed by the SEESOX/DiaNeosis survey on diaspora Greeks in the UK (Pratsinakis *et al.* 2020), the Greek Diaspora Project at SEESOX and other sources (Mavroudi 2018; Pratsinakis and Labrianidis 2017).

Results

As a first general observation, it is useful to contemplate the fact that a diaspora encompasses diverse communities which are not necessarily homogeneous. Therefore, the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland is not one-dimensional. The second observation is that the participation of a diaspora in homeland matters can take different forms, including economic remittances as well as 'ideas, practices, social capital and identities that are circulated between sending and receiving communities', collectively known as 'social remittances' (Lacroix, Levitt and Vari-Lavoisier 2016: 1).

Diaspora–homeland interactions: the case of Greece

Examining the case of Greece can be useful for observations regarding both emigration emanating from an economic crisis and also the homeland–diaspora nexus. Greece is an advanced Western economy and consolidated democracy which is undergoing a protracted recession with severe social consequences and major political changes. We therefore pose the following questions:
- What kind of interaction is developing between the homeland and its diaspora in this particular altered environment?
- What is the stance of the diasporans towards their home country?
- Are they interested in keeping ties with their homeland or in disengaging themselves from it?
- Why would they choose to keep either of these positions?
- What are the effects of these choices on the relationship between the two actors and for the country?

The case of Greece is one of 'crisis emigration' due to the difficult economic circumstances. In the period before the beginning of the crisis – i.e. before 2008 – Greeks were among the least mobile Europeans. There was a shift in numbers, whereby the effects of extreme austerity, the mistrust of institutions and the disappointment of the political system shaped a completely different mobility picture for Greeks. According to ongoing research for the Greek Diaspora Project in South East European Studies at the University of Oxford (SEESOX), more than 400 000 Greek citizens appear to have emigrated from Greece in the past seven years, heading for various destinations, mainly in Northern and Western Europe. Another significant qualitative transformation before the threshold event of the crisis is that emigration now constitutes a matter of need rather than a matter of choice, as it was before. In these extraordinary circumstances, the role of the diaspora has increased, not only numerically but as an agent with the potential to bring about change and affect domestic affairs.

According to the EUMIGRE study (Pratsinakis and Labrianidis 2017: 98), these Greeks who settled abroad and had mainly left before the crisis, were urged to act and 'do something' about it and about the grim socio-economic situation in Greece. For example, there were a number of initiatives in place, such as 'trying to organise and mobilise the diaspora, debunking negative representations about Greece abroad, informing and supporting potential investors in Greece, assisting emigrants in developing, new innovative business, etc.' (*ibidem*). Hugo and Bakalis (2014) emphasise that the Greek diaspora has the potential to help Greece economically and suggest that there needs to be policy intervention by the Greek state and research on strengthening the business and economic linkages between Greece and Australia, given the large Greek diasporic community there.

There is an interconnection between Greece and the countries of settlement of the new Greek emigrants in the form of transnational activities, development and the transfer of knowledge (Pratsinakis and Labrianidis 2017: 98). However, there are different barriers that emigrants faced in their efforts to engage in transnational activities with Greece, such as bureaucracy, the lack of transparency in employment conditions and insufficient support by institutions (*ibidem*). Mavroudi (2018: 1309) argues that diasporas do not axiomatically assist their

homelands at times of crisis under the assumption of 'long-distance nationalism, emotional attachment to the homeland and diasporic obligation'. Specifically, in her analysis of the Greek case during the economic and political crisis commencing in 2008, she discovered that there is a disconnectedness between 'strong emotional belonging' and diaspora mobilisation (*ibidem*). The prolonged crisis, the futility of their efforts and the little understanding by Greece's politicians and elites were some of the constraints of a material diasporic mobilisation (*ibidem*), along with the new diaspora's disapproval of systemic problems such as corruption. As Papangelopoulos and Merkle (2019) portray in their research, Greek emigrants of the new diaspora show a lower tolerance of corruption in the homeland, an effect of their experiences in the host country – the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom. Other diasporic Greeks pointed out that they were accustomed to the Australian way of conducting business, finding it difficult to get used to the tax evasion, corruption and mistrust of the state in the homeland (Mavroudi 2015: 181). Similarly, the EUMIGRE research project showed that the most recent emigrants were the least motivated to engage in transnational activities with Greece, either because they felt betrayed by the Greek state and pushed out of the country or because they needed to focus their energy on building their life abroad and any engagement with Greece would be a backward step (Pratsinakis and Labrianidis 2017: 98).

The results of the SEESOX survey on the Greek diaspora in the UK (2020) point in a similar direction, whereby it is observed that there is a differentiation between strong emotional attachment to and the comparatively weaker moral responsibility towards the motherland. There is a strong sense of an emotional bond with Greece but there is an absence of a moral obligation to contribute financially or in other ways because of the diaspora's disappointment with homeland's political institutions and long-term problems such as bureaucracy and corruption. The feeling of cultural affinity (Mavroudi 2018) and emotional connectedness (Christou 2011) is not an adequate prerequisite for Greeks to engage with the homeland at times of crisis. This is also confirmed by the decrease in remittances from the diaspora to Greece between 2009 and 2012 while, at the same time, the emigration flows tripled (Faure 2017). This decrease in remittances is positively correlated with the level of trust in the Greek political, institutional and banking system during the crisis period (*ibidem*).

In order to comprehend the interrelationship between Greece and its diaspora during the crisis, it is important to examine the political and economic context before the crisis started. In other words, the tools to unpack the positionality of the homeland towards the diaspora and *vice versa* can be found in the years before the crisis. The institutional shortcomings and the absence of a clear diasporic strategy are the defining elements of the era that followed. The already deficient diaspora policy framework, characterised by short-termism, was further negatively affected by budgetary cuts. For example, in the past (the 1990s and 2000s) several diaspora community organisations received economic support from the General Secretariat for the Greeks Abroad (GSGA) – a special government agency created to deal with emigrants' problems and help them to organise themselves. However, nowadays (since 2010) such funding has been considerably reduced – a development relating to budget cuts and new bureaucratic requirements (e.g. organisations need to acquire a Greek tax identification number (AFM) in order to request funding) (Cavounidis 2016: 97). Reductions in the GSGA budget also had an impact on the funding of Greek educational programmes abroad, hence the funding of these programmes is a priority in countries with low GDP *per capita*, in which the local diaspora cannot sustain these programmes with its own resources, typically countries of the former Soviet Union (2016: 96). Furthermore, another important institution dedicated to connecting and supporting the global Greek diaspora – the World Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE)[4] – had been showing signs of decay before the crisis, with a number of structural deficiencies (Frangos 2019).

As a general comment, when looking at the pre-crisis era with regards to the position of the state towards the diaspora, pathogenies of the Greek political system contributed to an inefficient diaspora policy. The homeland regarded its diaspora as an extension of itself, as an overseas segment of a transterritorial nation (Kitroeff

1989). Domestic party politics and conflicts were reproduced abroad as well. The conflict between the two major political parties, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and Nea Dimokratia, led to 'big divisions in the diaspora' (Prevelakis 2000: 182). Moreover, using the diaspora as leverage for promoting foreign policy interests (e.g. the dispute over the Macedonian name[5] and the situation in Cyprus) has been a constant practice. Also, in the pre-crisis years, parties mobilised the diaspora vote by financing flights during election time for voters not residing in Greece in exchange for their support. The issues that dominated the diaspora debate pre-2009 were the facilitation of the expat vote and cultural and national issues.

Looking at the crisis years – i.e. after 2008 – the engagement with the diaspora that the homeland and specifically the political elites sought to establish was not special or particularly enhanced (Kalantzi and Anastasakis 2018). This is demonstrated through the frequency of the parliamentary dialogue regarding the Greek diaspora, which did not intensify (*ibidem*). It is also obvious in the absence of any particular new plan or the drafting of any new (*ibidem*). As Mavrodi and Moutselos (2016: 45) also note, the absence of specific laws targeting recent migrants and passed by the Greek parliament since 2008 mirrors the absence of an institutional framework for the Greek diaspora. Indicatively, despite the fact that the GSGA's main goal is diaspora engagement, there has not been any systematic attempt to attract diaspora investment (Cavounidis 2016). Also, although a draft bill concerning SAE was discussed in the Special Permanent Parliamentary Committee for the Greek Diaspora, there was a lot of disagreement between the political parties concerning the re-establishment of plans for the Council (2016: 102). The SAE has been inactive since 2010 and, although its refounding has been discussed several times, it has not yet been achieved. In January 2019, the Syriza MP and President of the Special Permanent Committee on Greeks Abroad, Alexandros Triandafyllidis, submitted a proposal for the relaunch of the SAE to the Greek parliamentary committee. In July 2020, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nikos Dendias, in his letter to several big Greek diasporic organisations, talked about the re-establishment of the SAE and said that that this reform reflects the Greek government's goal to maximise the national benefit to be gained from the power of the diaspora Greeks.

Furthermore, one of the recurring subjects in the Greek parliament during the crisis years has been the issue of brain-drain and the much-needed policies to be implemented to halt it (Kalantzi and Anastasakis 2018). Another of the most prominent issues that have dominated public and political discourse during the crisis years has been the political participation of Greeks abroad. In particular, the issue of the voting rights[6] for Greeks abroad, which reappeared at the forefront of political debate and which has been more vigorously discussed in the Greek parliament than in the pre-crisis period. In fact, the crisis in Greece was one among a multitude of complex factors that led to the facilitation of the diasporic vote.

Apart from the discussion of the new wave of emigrants and the diaspora vote, there has been an on-going dialogue in academic and business circles about the crisis-driven Greek entrepreneurship, the creation of new networks and the synergies between homeland and diaspora – i.e. through skills and knowledge transfer, the expansion of diasporans' businesses in the homeland by opening branches there, investments and the transformation of brain-drain into brain-gain. The involvement of the diaspora in the advancement of the Greek economy, its wider political participation – through, for example, its contribution to policy debates and public life – and its philanthropic activity, all have the potential to impact tangibly on the economic, political and social life of Greece. Throughout the crisis, there has been an increasing involvement of the Greek technocratic and academic diaspora, which has been active in the Greek policy debate via op-ed articles, conference participation and television appearances. There are also several entrepreneurial and philanthropic initiatives that were established in order to support Greece at the time of the economic crisis, an example of which is Reload Greece, an organisation which, through different activities and programmes, supports the new generation of entrepreneurs in the establishment of ventures with a social and economic impact in their home country. Then there is the Hellenic Initiative (THI), a philanthropic organisation with a mandate to assist Greece in difficult times

which was first established in the US by prominent Greek-Americans and members of Greece's transnational elite. Relatedly, diaspora and transnational foundations contributed to state agencies during the crisis, particularly for social welfare and public health purposes (Kamaras 2018).

Based on the above analysis, we need to make two important points on the interrelationship between Greece and its diaspora. Firstly, the positive Greek political and public discourse about the diaspora was not reflected in policies that would mutually benefit both the homeland and the diaspora. The diaspora also had certain expectations from the homeland, based on political rhetoric but also on the fact that the younger generation, in particular, had been and was obliged to leave the home country for a better life. From the point of view of the diaspora, there has been a diffused feeling that Greece remembers its 'children' abroad whenever there is a crisis. Secondly, engagement by a segment of the diaspora, as portrayed above, did not outweigh the diaspora's wider sense of bitterness and disconnection with the homeland. Certainly, the involvement of some diasporans – e.g. from the business world and academia – in assisting the homeland illustrates the ways in which Greece can benefit from its diaspora, if it builds up a consistent policy framework.

Diaspora–homeland interactions: the case of Ukraine

Ukraine has also been going through a series of interconnected political and economic crises, notably the Euromaidan protests in 2013, the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the Russian military aggression in Eastern Ukraine in 2014.[7] These events have been summarised as 'the Ukrainian crisis' – understood as a prolonged 'classic crisis' that has a potential impact on the post-Cold War international order (Menon and Rumer 2015).

In the years prior to the Euromaidan protests, political instability and endemic corruption triggered not only a movement for democratisation and deeper ties with the European Union among increasing elements of the Ukrainian society but also migration aspirations among a significant part of the population. This was a typical voice/exit/loyalty situation, as conceptualised by Hirshmann (1970). Ukraine already has one of the largest diasporas in the world, while the resident population has continued to decline since the 1990s, partly due to the high emigration rate (Düvell and Lapshyna 2015).

For many years, the migration discourse in Ukraine was dominated by a negative image of migration. Emigrants are often perceived as 'traitors/betrayers of the nation' and 'defectors' – those leaving an independent Ukraine rather than staying to help 'build the new Ukraine'. Even remittances are often discredited as 'easy money' 'corrupting those left behind' or stimulating rise in property prices in Ukraine (Solari 2010: 222). However, during the Euromaidan protests in 2013 and their aftermath, the Ukrainian diaspora, through its widened participation, mobilised a considerable spectrum of support for the home country which, in turn, contributed to a certain positive shift in the perception of Ukrainian emigrants and the diaspora more generally.

Euromaidan not only resulted in a change of government but also triggered a Russian military intervention, which subsequently left Ukraine in an economic downturn, with thousands killed and millions of citizens displaced. These dramatic events in Ukraine have mobilised activists, volunteers, associations, various NGOs and foundations and triggered a powerful wave of diasporic activities throughout the world. They also transformed the Ukrainian diaspora from a more inward-looking one to a more outward-looking community which, as a result, is now engaging more with Ukrainian affairs.

Endorsing Koinova (2018), we can argue that the Ukrainian crisis has all the preconditions for being considered as a critical juncture for the country and for its diaspora. The critical transformative events in 2014, Euromaidan and, following that, the Crimea annexation and the war in Eastern Ukraine, changed the homeland–diaspora nexus. Similar to our findings, a recent study by Nikolko (2019) showed how the Ukrainian crisis of 2014–2015 further solidified the bond between the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada and the homeland and produced a long-lasting impact.

Drawing on interviews with the Ukrainian diaspora and observational research on the Ukrainian diaspora engagement in the UK, the following findings were identified. The Ukrainian diaspora in the UK is quite segmented and diverse, depending on their age, social class, skills, religion, migration motives, migration status and period of stay. Generally, all the segments engage in different activities, have different target groups and spheres of influence and complement one another. Despite their segmentation and some related tensions, there still is a dialogue and collaboration between the conventional old and the new diaspora. By 'old diaspora' we refer specifically to the community of post-World War II immigrants and their descendants. The 'new diaspora' we understand migrants from an independent Ukraine, who left the country in large numbers from 1991 onwards. They have different characteristics from those who have lived in the UK for the longer period of time. What they have in common are concerns about affairs in the country of origin, Ukraine. Notably, all diaspora groups contribute to their home country. Many low-skilled or even undocumented migrants actively contribute to activities such as the provision of humanitarian aid.

Euromaidan, the annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine have inspired many members of the old diaspora and newcomers alike to get involved and to make powerful contributions to Ukraine. The old diaspora in London refers mostly to the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, which is the largest representative body for Ukrainians and those of Ukrainian descent. It has been actively engaged in transnational protests in London. At the beginning of the Euromaidan movement, solidarity activities were organised but, when matters turned violent, humanitarian aid became their main field of activity.

New diasporas set up solidarity groups like 'London Euromaidan' or 'British-Ukrainian Aid' while others organised demonstrations and public awareness-raising events or collected money and engaged in Ukrainian matters. Notably, many are providing Ukrainian soldiers and volunteers with military and medical aid, whilst others are collecting humanitarian aid and helping internally displaced persons. For instance, British-Ukrainian Aid (BUAid, formerly known as Ukraine Aid) is a group of UK-based volunteers who are supporting the needs of people affected by war and the humanitarian crisis. It raises funds to purchase the spare parts necessary for the production of prosthetics which are urgently needed by those who have lost their limbs during the war in Eastern Ukraine, it provides financial assistance for children in need and collects donations of warm clothes, shoes and food, it seeks cooperation with UK medical institutions that are better equipped and resourced to address the needs of the wounded and injured and it helps internally displaced persons in Ukraine.

Another field where the diaspora plays a significant role and contributes to the homeland is the promotion of Ukraine abroad. The Ukrainian Institute in London is an important platform for promoting knowledge about Ukraine, Ukrainians, their culture and history and the country's current affairs and religious life; it also runs a Ukrainian-language school and initiates public discussions.

Another example of the Ukrainian diaspora's contribution to the homeland is a project entitled *Leadership Education And Development* (LEAD) by the Young City Club of the London non-profit organisation Ukrainian-British City Club. The project invites Ukrainian students to spend ten days in London, where it exposes them to professional environments to gain insights into the work ethics and corporate culture of the UK's public- and private-sector institutions. Through participation in workshops, case studies and group projects, participants explore the concepts of transparency, compliance and public governance.

In another case the 'Ukrainian Youth Association in Great Britain' organised several summer camps for children who had lost a parent during the war. The Association of Ukrainian Women in Great Britain provided Ukrainian soldiers with medical aid and warm clothes and sent Christmas gifts to the children who had lost a parent during the war.

The Ukrainian diaspora also turned out to be a source of soft power for the country – for instance, it acted as the country's ambassadors and cultural diplomats abroad. Their lobby raised international attention for the war in Ukraine and countered misperceptions of Ukraine and Russian misinformation.

Bringing together the observations presented in this article, we can see that the diaspora claims to be recognised by the Ukrainian government as an important stakeholder which actively transfers social, cultural and technological capital that can have an impact on Ukraine's development. From our interviews with different representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora, it became clear that the Ukrainians who are volunteering, through their daily activities, transmit fundamental European values such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, transparency, equality and the rule of law. European values are not only cultivated by the Ukrainian diaspora in the UK but are disseminated in interactions with state and non-state actors in Ukraine. As in our findings, Oleinikova and Bayeh (2020) in their book on the example of post-Euromaidan Ukraine, showed how modern diasporas contribute to shaping democracy from a distance and how, through their political activity, they are becoming increasingly democratised themselves.

In terms of any future post-crisis activities of the Ukrainian diaspora in the UK, the activists claimed that they 'would still be active' [UK4].[8] They suggested that they have to communicate with the governments in Ukraine and the UK in order to help the Ukrainian government to support its economic and political stability and to continue its dialogue with the British government in a bid to keep up its support of Ukraine.

Crucially, according to the interviewees, one of the main constraints on diaspora contributions is that the Ukrainian authorities hardly ever recognise and engage with its diaspora and have been almost absent from these diaspora activities. A senior representative of the old diaspora explained: 'There is a department (responsible for the diaspora) in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs but I've seen that absolutely very little has been done. When the Minister for Foreign Affairs was in London he did not meet with the diaspora. It was a signal' [UK14].

Ukraine's lack of collaboration with Ukrainians abroad was strongly criticised by the Ukrainian diaspora in the UK. Almost all our interviewees emphasised that the Ukrainian government and the diaspora should work together and utilise each others' strengths for synergy. As expressed by the representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora:

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has to elaborate a concept of collaboration with the Ukrainian diaspora in different countries. The diaspora has to participate in this programme of elaboration. A road map and action plan should be prepared together. We are ready to represent Ukraine abroad and work effectively in the lobbying for Ukraine's interests. On the other hand, feedback is very important for us. We want the Ukrainian authorities to react to our criticism, to work better and more efficiently [UK4].

Apart from the lack of commitment by the origin country, several interviewees pointed to the weak role of the Ukrainian Embassy in London:

Unfortunately, our (Ukrainian) Embassy in London is very passive [UK1].

The Ukrainian Embassy is not doing enough. I attended many events organised by other Embassies – Colombian, Brazilian, American. They are offering cultural and educational programmes representing their countries. The Ukrainian Embassy does nothing. It is not right that Ukraine is not represented [UK 16].

Based on these findings, we can conclude that the Ukrainian diasporic community in the UK has an interest, willingness and potential to support the development of its homeland beyond the transfer of remittances to their families. It has made significant contributions to Ukraine's economic, social and political development and provided relief assistance in response to the crisis. These are indeed crucial and there is significant potential to do much more.

Concluding remarks

Comparing the two cases – Greece and Ukraine – and their interrelationship with their diaspora reveals certain similarities and differences between them. These are two countries that went through severe economic and political crises. In the case of Greece, the unprecedented financial crisis and severe austerity immobilised the country on all fronts. Unemployment and the lack of prospects for the younger generation were two of the most prominent negative effects. Impoverishment, salary cuts, the rise in taxes, loss of confidence in the Greek economy and general social and political instability were forming the country's profile. One of the most destructive elements of the crisis that had a huge effect on the exodus of people from all educational and financial backgrounds was the absence of predictability for the future, visible prospects and hope.

The Ukraine crisis erupted in early 2014, when Ukrainian anti-government protests were followed by political upheaval and international crisis. The Euromaidan revolution and the intervention of Russia – the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the war in the east – as a consequence also plunged Ukraine into an economic crisis. Living standards in Ukraine plummeted to levels not seen since the early 2000s in a country that was already among the poorest in Europe. Ukraine has faced a sharp GDP contraction, high inflation and increased unemployment. Further to the politico-military turmoil, the Ukraine crisis soon resulted in a humanitarian emergency, with many internally displaced persons. These events in Ukraine triggered a wave of diasporic activities throughout the world.

Both countries acknowledge (Ukraine recently so) the potential importance of the diaspora in their economic development or with their political participation; however both appeared to not have consistency and a long-term vision concerning policies concerning their diasporas. Symbolically both countries acknowledged the importance of their diaspora; Greece was always consistent on this, in contrast to Ukraine which, for a long time, employed a negative rhetoric and image of its diasporans. In the case of Greece, in political and public discourse, diasporic Greeks had a positive profile. The positive rhetoric was in contradiction with the country's policy-making; for example, the diasporic vote was facilitated only recently (December 2019). The diaspora's expectations were high as, firstly, there were promises by the Greek government and, secondly, the homeland had always had expectations of the Greek diaspora, counting on the latter for their financial or other support, such as lobbying for foreign policy issues. This contrasts with the Ukrainian case where, for a long period of time, Ukrainians abroad were often perceived rather negatively. Emigrants were often seen as deserting their country. The diaspora, on the one hand, were perceived as beggars who constantly wanted something and, on the other, as a 'cash cow' [U42]. In addition, in the past the Ukrainian diaspora has been blamed for offering unsolicited advice to people back home. All these inevitably contributed to the fact that many Ukranian diasporans do not have high expectations of their homeland government.

In any case, during the crises, neither country managed to develop policies to mobilise and efficiently engage with their diaspora in order to uplift the economic and political environment. The main reasons were the lack of active commitment by the home country, the mistrust between governments and political activism of some diaspora organisations, insufficient funding, underdeveloped diaspora institutions and a lack of political will. In both cases, the diasporas, which have grown in size due to the special circumstances in the home country, are a source of potential economic, political and cultural support. Specifically for Greece, the political and economic landscape has been one of the defining factors of the weak diaspora policy framework. The financial crisis further ingrained the problematic aspects of the Greek economy in general and the diaspora-related finances in particular. Budgetary cuts had an effect, for example, on the closure of consulates while the reduction of funding by the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad had an impact on the financing of Greek educational programmes abroad.

Already, we can see that networks between diasporans and those in the home country operate through family, friendships and professional relationships. In the case of Greeks who left the country between 2008 and 2018 in order to search for better prospects, much research shows (as analysed above) that some of them prefer to disengage with the mother country, either out of frustration and bitterness or in order to build their new lives undistracted by the problems back home. The cultural affinity and strong bonds with the homeland that reveal themselves, for example, in the sustainability of strong networks, were not factors adequate enough to counterbalance the negative feelings of the diaspora about the chronic socio-political problems in Greece. During the crisis, a diaspora's feelings are intense but do not necessarily translate into direct action, especially when there is prolonged crisis, as in the case of Greece. As the SEESOX/DiaNEOsis survey (2020) revealed, Greeks in the UK feel emotionally attached to Greece – and feel a moral responsibility to 'their own people' who live there – but they do not feel any moral obligation to help Greece either financially or by any other means because of the country's unreliability in terms of its political system and institutions. The involvement of some academics, technocrats and philanthropic initiatives from the diaspora during the crisis represents only a section of the Greek diaspora and does not counterbalance the wider feeling of disengagement from the homeland. Any such engagement would highlight how Greece can benefit from its diaspora through a consistent and long-term policy-making that will focus on institutionalising informal networks and sporadic diaspora contributions.

In the case of Ukraine, we observed somewhat different effects of the crisis on its diaspora. The crisis had a very strong mobilising effect on Ukrainians abroad and significantly revitalised diasporic life. Euromaidan and its aftermath mobilised activists, volunteers, associations, various NGOs and foundations and triggered a powerful wave of diasporic activities. By reacting to the crisis, the Ukrainian diaspora transformed from being a more inward- to a more outward-looking community which, as a result, is now engaging more with but also claiming a stake in Ukrainian affairs. Thus, the Ukrainian diaspora can be viewed as an important stakeholder in helping Ukraine to respond to major events. The question that remains to be answered in further research is whether such diaspora engagement remains sustainable in the post-crisis period.

Thus, this comparison of these two countries and their relationship with their respective diasporas at times of crisis has, at best, a mixed outcome, illustrating that there is no simple path-dependence between crisis and diaspora engagement; crises at home do not necessarily result in diaspora engagement but the nexus depends on a whole host of factors. However, it has also become evident that these factors can be politically influenced and that there is scope for improving these relationships and engaging constructively for the sake of the diaspora contributing to improving matters in their country of origin whilst enhancing the position and self-esteem of people abroad.

Notes

[1] Koinova (2018) instrumentalises the concept of 'transformative events' in diaspora scholarship and argues that they can transform the trajectory of already existing diaspora mobilisations. The term 'transformative event', as used in social movement scholarship, is 'a crucial turning point for a social movement that dramatically increases or decreases the level of mobilisation' (Hees and Martin 2006: 249).

[2] The full title of the project is *New European Mobilities at Times of Crisis: Emigration Aspirations and Practices of Young Greek Adults*. It was carried out between 2015 and 2017 and was based at the University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece.

[3] In the Greek case, we have used qualitative and quantitative data from different projects, scrutinised debates in the Greek Parliament and reports from the Special Permanent Committee on Greeks abroad

and studied secondary data. In the Ukrainian case, we have used findings from interviews and secondary data.

[4] The SAE had an advisory role to the Greek state on diaspora matters.

[5] The dispute about the use of the name 'Macedonia' occurred between Greece and the country now known as 'The Republic of North Macedonia' between 1991 and 2018.

[6] Facilitation of the voting rights of Greek citizens residing abroad has been a recurring issue in political and public discourse and a long-term request by the diaspora. In 2019, the Greek parliament voted in – by an overwhelming majority – a long overdue law which allowed Greeks in the diaspora to vote from their place of residence.

[7] The significance of Euromaidan for Ukraine is related to a geopolitical factor. Due to Euromaidan and post-maidan developments, Ukraine shifted from being 'multi-vectored' to being clearly pro-European and hence a pro-democratic official self-designation (including ongoing efforts to join the European Union and NATO) (George G. Grabowicz quoted in Minakov 2018).

[8] [UK14]: UK refers to the UK, 14 is the number of the respondent. [U42]: U refers to the Ukraine, 42 is the number of the respondent.

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Helping the Homeland in Troubled Times: Advocacy by Canada's Ukrainian Diaspora in the Context of Regime Change and War in Ukraine

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This paper analyses diaspora advocacy on behalf of Ukraine as practiced by a particular diaspora group, Ukrainian Canadians, in a period of high volatility in Ukraine: from the EuroMaidan protests to the Russian invasion of Eastern Ukraine. This article seeks to add to the debate on how conflict in the homeland affects a diaspora's mobilisation and advocacy patterns. I argue that the Maidan and the war played an important role not only in mobilising and uniting disparate diaspora communities in Canada but also in producing new advocacy strategies and increasing the diaspora's political visibility. The paper begins by mapping out the diaspora players engaged in pro-Ukraine advocacy in Canada. It is followed by an analysis of the diaspora's patterns of mobilisation and a discussion of actual advocacy outcomes. The second part of the paper investigates successes in the diaspora's post-Maidan communication strategies. Evidence indicates that the diaspora's advocacy from Canada not only brought much-needed assistance to Ukraine but also contributed to strengthening its own image as an influential player. Finally, the paper suggests that political events in the homeland can serve as a mobilising factor but produce effective advocacy only when a diaspora has already achieved a high level of organisational capacity and created well-established channels via which to lobby for homeland interests.

Keywords: Ukrainian diaspora in Canada, EuroMaidan, Russian invasion, lobbying, homeland conflict, Revolution of Dignity

Introduction

At the end of 2013, a high degree of political and social tension in Ukraine led to protests known as the Euro-Maidan. The protests were triggered by the refusal of ex-president Viktor Yanukovych to sign Association Agreements with the European Union (EU). By January 2014, the peaceful anti-government protests turned

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into violence and culminated in the Revolution of Dignity. One month later, in February 2014, the protests caused Ukraine's President Yanukovych to flee to Russia, an event followed by Russia's swift annexation of Crimea and the invasion of Donetsk and Luhansk in Eastern Ukraine. Needless to say, these events have overshadowed all others for the global Ukrainian diaspora. The Ukrainian diaspora in Canada, the second largest diaspora in the world with over 1.4 million people claiming Ukrainian origin,[1] appeared at the frontlines of advocacy for Ukraine.

This paper aims to answer the following question: To what extent do significant political developments in the 'homeland' (e.g. Ukraine) affect patterns of diaspora mobilisation in general and lead to effective advocacy practices in particular? By using as a case study the Ukrainian Canadian diaspora's advocacy for Ukraine during the post-Maidan period (2013–2017) this study analyses the relationship between homeland events and their effect on the diaspora's ability to advocate and mobilise for the cause.

The findings rely on qualitative data collected by means of archival research, in-depth interviews, document and mass-media analysis and participant observation. Among my sources were Canadian mainstream and Ukrainian ethnic press, official publications of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, other diaspora organisations, government publications. Participant observation took place in Canada between 2014 and 2019 when I was attending different public events, rallies organised by the Ukrainian Canadians. Over 25 semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the Ukrainian Canadian community living in Canada, civil servants and some political staffer working for Canadian Members of Parliament during 2016–2019. Purposive sampling was selected as a strategy for choosing the participants for this study. This means that individuals were selected for interview based on who they are or were, what they do or did and what they know about Ukrainian diaspora activism in Canada and the process of advocacy on behalf of Ukrainian Canadians.

Theoretical accounts of diaspora mobilisation and advocacy

First of all, it is important to stress that this article adopts neither a purely constructivist nor essentialist definition of diaspora. Instead, it follows Grossmann's approach, which views diaspora as a transnational community whose members share a number of attributes such as dispersal or immigration, location outside a homeland, community orientation to a homeland, transnationalism and group identity (Grossmann 2019: 1267). This approach sees diasporas as both actual social formations (entities) and social constructs (Grossmann 2019: 1265).

The diaspora literature almost unanimously argues that the power of an event, in particular political tension in the homeland, affects diaspora communities in a variety of ways (Baser 2014; DeWind and Segura 2014). Significant political tension in the homeland can be important for triggering a wave of ethnic political mobilisation in the diaspora that makes the latter politically more active (Hockenos 2003; Shain 2007; Smith 2005). Homeland conflicts and wars in most cases have the strongest impact on diaspora mobilisation, in both positive and negative ways. Negative influences have been traced in the cases of Croatian and Tamil mobilisation in Canada (Godwin 2012; Winland 2007), because their activity became connected to the transfer of funds and illegal arms to conflict zones, thus further fueling conflicts. Mearsheimer and Walt (2007) have noted that the most violent periods of the Arab–Israel conflict were connected with the most active phases of Jewish lobbying in the USA. Moreover, a larger part of the literature studying the causes of mobilisation focuses on how a trigger event impacts diaspora–homeland relations, changing already established advocacy patterns of diaspora groups in the countries of their residence. This last development is the primary focus of this article.

Many scholars of diaspora studies identify certain diasporas as being conflict-generated. For instance, Columbian, Croatian, Albanian and Sri Lanka diasporas are often viewed as such (Godwin 2012; Winland 2007).

The Ukrainian diaspora has never been classified as such because its consciousness had been generated through other means and the conflict in Ukraine came to the diaspora as an unexpected and frustrating development.

Since the 1970s, an increasing number of scholarly works have paid attention to the political influence of ethnic groups, especially in regard to foreign policy. Most authors have viewed the political activities of ethnic groups as a legitimate phenomenon of liberal democratic states that can be compared to the political activism of other interest groups (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007; Smith 2005). The vast body of literature on diaspora political lobbying has focused on answering the question: Under what conditions are ethnic actors able to influence the policy process? There are a number of assumptions that scholars offer to explain cases of diaspora advocacy influence. The abundance of research available on this topic says that diaspora groups' success depends on a variety of factors, which can roughly be divided into structure-based and agency-based ones (Rytz 2013), the most-cited of which are the lobby's organisational capacity (Watanabe 1984), its political salience (Rubenzer 2008), the nature of the cause which the diaspora advances, the absence of a competing lobby group with an opposing cause and the alignment of the diaspora's interests with those of the state. The latter idea received particular attention from interest-group scholars – Rubenzer calls it 'strategic convergence', while DeWind and Segura (2014) utilised the term 'convergence/divergence theory'. The concept of strategic convergence suggests that, in order to move its file forward, it is important for an interest group to find common ground with a government's agenda (Haney and Vanderbush 1999; Smith 2014). In this paper I aim to show the extent to which these theories still hold and which one has the highest relevance when advocacy's ultimate goal is to assist a homeland in mitigating the consequences of ongoing conflict.

Different diaspora groups representing the same ethos but living in different parts of the world allegedly have varying degrees of influence on foreign policy (Laguerre 2013; Satzewich 2002). So how can we measure the influence of ethnic lobbying? The question of influence is a highly debated topic in political science, especially in the ethnic lobbying literature. Influence can be either 'perceived' or real. In this paper I adopt the definition of influence used by Helen Helboe Pedersen (2013), who views it as control over observable political outputs, such as bills or parliamentary debates: 'This means that an actor is viewed as influential, if behavior results in or prevents changes in political decisions or in the political agenda that are preferable/undesirable to the actor' (Helboe Pedersen 2013: 30).

Political advocates of the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada

Bearing in mind the above theoretical postulates that stress the importance of agency, any analysis of the diaspora's advocacy toward Ukraine would be incomplete without a detailed understanding of the actors engaged in it.

In Canada, the politics of multiculturalism and general spirit of interest-group pluralism promote cultural diversity and do not restrain the political activism of ethnic interest groups (Breton and Reitz 2005; Goldberg 1990). The Ukrainian diaspora is a mature community engaged in different types of advocacy activity, which can be divided into political advocacy aimed at decisions-makers and social advocacy that seeks to impact on public opinion. However, often these two types of diaspora advocacy are very similar and it becomes difficult to distinguish which targeted audience the advocacy groups seek to impact on or to establish boundaries between social and political diaspora advocacy practices.

Evidence indicates that the Ukrainian diaspora's advocacy for Ukraine derives from three qualitatively different types of advocate: large institutionalised diaspora players, individual diaspora entrepreneurs and diaspora politicians.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress[2] (UCC) is a core organisation of the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada. It was formed as an umbrella organisation that sets as its mandate the representation of the Ukrainian Canadian

population. In my research, the UCC is classified as an institutionalised diaspora player. Overall, the UCC, based on its size, experience and organisational and fundraising capacity, has the greatest ability to work as an official lobbyist for Ukraine, which means methodologically being engaged both in political and social advocacy for the country. Other smaller organisations of Ukrainian Canadians are usually members of this umbrella organisation and deliver their interests through the UCC.

The diaspora's involvement in political advocacy for Ukraine began long before the dramatic events there. Since 1991, or the Independence of Ukraine, the UCC's political function has increased and its role has come to encompass political advocacy with regard to Ukraine. In 1996, the UCC launched the Canada–Ukraine Stakeholder Advisory Council (CUSAC – formerly the Canada–Ukraine Advisory Council), a forum for consultations between the UCC (just one of many organisations in the Ukrainian Canadian community) and the Government of Canada that is used as a platform for political advocacy for Ukraine. Its key function is to represent the Ukrainian Canadian Community before the Government of Canada by holding regular meetings between the UCC, Global Affairs Canada and other representatives of state authorities so as to keep the Canadian government informed. CUSAC has become a tool with which to inform government authorities of the agenda and interests of the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada, thus keeping Ukraine on the list of Canada's top foreign policy priorities.

By the beginning of the tumultuous events of the EuroMaidan at the end of 2013, the UCC had already grown into a well-established professional advocacy organisation according to Mearsheimer and Walt's (2007) criteria: in 2010, the UCC moved its national office to Ottawa, a short distance from Parliament Hill, hired full-time professional staff (such as Taras Zalucky, its executive director from 2010 to 2016 and a former chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to Federal cabinet Ministers) were able to communicate with elected officials on a regular basis. In 2010 the UCC's Triennial Congress elected Paul Grod as its president. Grod's tenure (from 2010 to 2018) is firmly associated with higher professionalisation in the UCC and its rising political clout on the Hill. During Grod's time in office, the UCC achieved a very high level of involvement with the government and public affairs: official records show that UCC's executives often hold formal meetings with the prime minister and other high-ranking governmental officials, as well as opposition leaders, during which they discuss issues that are important for the community. Notably, over the last ten years, almost every large Canadian delegation to Ukraine was accompanied by UCC representatives.

Considering the fact that diaspora leaders tend to exaggerate their power in order to increase their political clout (Smith 2005: 76), this study does not solely rely on a self-assessment of their influence as valid data. What must be stressed is that the UCC's public image as an influential organisation is supported by data received by interviewing political staffers. As many of them have indicated, in terms of political clout, only the Jewish Congress in Ottawa is better organised that the UCC; its staff are very professional and the organisation is well known on the Hill among politicians and bureaucrats. Thus far, the Ukrainian diaspora does not have an equally well-organised political competitor that would represent rival (e.g. pro-Russian) interests in Canada.

Canada's ethnic politics provides an arena for many players who may consider themselves obliged or motivated to speak on behalf of Canadian Ukrainians or Ukraine. Despite the fact that the existence of well-institutionalised ethnic organisations is a key to political influence (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007), in political advocacy individuals acting outside of established channels and identifying themselves as relatives of the diaspora, can often be influential. In the academic literature and mass-media publications, the catch-all terms 'ethnic lobby' or 'diaspora lobby' are used frequently and contribute to a false impression of diasporic unity. Analytically speaking, when it comes to political advocacy in the diaspora, the most problematic issue is how to recognize whose voice actually constitutes the interests of the Ukrainian diaspora and Ukraine and how to separate this voice from the interests of private individuals and groups speaking on behalf of Ukrainian Canadians.

In the Ukrainian diaspora of Canada, the UCC, despite being the loudest, is not the only voice. Numerous pro-Ukraine diaspora entrepreneurs, like their well-institutionalised peers (the UCC), also claim to represent the interests of the Ukrainian diaspora and can be engaged both in political and social advocacy. Empirical evidence suggests that, in Canada, there are many different Ukrainian diaspora groups who, by writing op-eds and newspaper articles and engaging in all sorts of advocacy actions, voice pro-Ukrainian views that are qualitatively different from the umbrella organisation's agendas and concerns.

Individual ethnic politicians are those who recognise (and often emphasise) their own ethnic background, using it strategically. They should be considered a part of the so-called Ukrainian diaspora lobby in Canada. Contemporary literature on ethnic lobbying finds that their role in political advocacy is important (Jiménez 2014) and, in the case of its effect on advocating a pro-Ukrainian cause, should not be underestimated. Historically, the representation of Canadian politicians of Ukrainian descent at the federal level has always varied. Starting as early as the 1920s, Ukrainian Canadians began electing MPs (the first of Ukrainian descent being Michael Luchkovich, in office between 1926 and 1935) who represented the community at the federal level. The first Ukrainian MP who achieved a cabinet minister position was Michal Starr in 1959 (Momryk 2018). However, analysis of the recent performance of Canadian politicians with regard to political advocacy for Ukraine highlights the importance of the quality and not the number of representatives or their origin in the diaspora communities. Numerous cases can be easily identified of MPs of Ukrainian background voting against pro-Ukraine initiatives. Ethnic MPs are restrained in their capacity to support ethnic causes because the Canadian political system leaves little room for individual MPs to act against their own party's line, even when their own constituents support alternative political solutions.

Overall the composition of the last three Canadian parliaments (a Conservative majority under Steven Harper, in the 41st Federal election in 2011 and a Liberal majority for Justin Trudeau in the 42nd in 2015) provided opportunities for advocating Ukraine's interests at both the federal and provincial levels: each political party had several representatives with loyalties toward Ukraine. Canada's 42nd federal elections of 2015 saw the election not only of a number of politicians who claimed Ukrainian ancestry,[3] but also of two cabinet ministers: the journalist and writer Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade) and MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Labour). However, the latter's tenure as minister did not last long, whereas Freeland was promoted to the rank of Minister of Foreign Affairs. In order to explain what having high-ranking officials for organised diaspora groups means, one might cite an interview with an anonymous high-profile diaspora activist in December 2018: 'We [organised diaspora] don't have to teach Chrystia what to do, as she knows without our briefings what Ukraine needs'. This quote should be understood as meaning that Ukrainian community organisations do not necessarily maintain a direct interaction with Chrystia Freeland or other politicians. In other words, the fact of having top-ranked foreign-policy decision-makers does not immediately resolve the diaspora's problem of free access to them.

Indeed, the Canadian political system, compared to that of the US, makes cabinet ministers perhaps the most important decision-makers after the prime minister. Their influence is considerably higher than that of ordinary MPs who are considered to be ineffective targets for lobbying (Singh 2010: 26), which has raised the profile of the Ukrainian community's possible influence even higher and moves pro-Ukrainian cabinet ministers into the category of elite diaspora players.

By and large, the role of diaspora advocacy groups or individual players can be summarised as follows:
- informing the Canadian government on matters dealing with Ukraine through official channels, thus creating a favourable environment for the Embassy's work;
- using typical grass root instruments (protests, rallies, petitions) to inform the general public on issues that matter to the Ukrainian cause; and

- utilising one's own channels of communication with the government, like CUSAC, to lobby for selected causes independently.

This means that diaspora players, especially institutionalised ones like the UCC, being independent from the Ukrainian state, may play a role greater than being simply a facilitator of Ukraine–Canada interests. In this formulation, diaspora organisations in practice become independent from Ukraine as political players, providing no information to the Ukrainian Embassy regarding their initiatives and the funds contributed in support of their pro-Ukraine projects. While diaspora group advocacy can be extremely effective on certain issues, neither diaspora lobbyists like the UCC nor other individual non-institutionalised diaspora players can act on behalf of the Ukrainian state, as certain types of work can only be done by a direct representative of the country, like the Embassy of Ukraine in Canada. As Shain and Barth would argue, they are not accountable to Ukraine's representatives abroad but do have a capacity to become massive advocates of Ukrainian interests as long as the political structure of Canada permits this (Shain and Barth 2003).

It should be noted that, today, the diaspora's core members (including the leadership, largest donors and lay activists), along with both individual advocates and representatives of major institutionalised players, are by and large represented by an older fraction of the Ukrainian community in Canada, with a very high percentage of them being the children or grandchildren of the third wave of immigrants – those who arrived in Canada between 1948 and 1953 as post-World War II Ukrainian refugees.

From EuroMaidan to the Revolution of Dignity: mobilisation

If one asks whether the Maidan protests and the subsequent conflict with Russia were triggers that boosted political advocacy towards Ukraine in the Ukrainian diaspora of Canada, my answer would be yes. Those events, first and foremost, caused unprecedented political activism in diaspora circles. The sequence of events observed in Canadian Ukrainian circles very much corresponded to the main theoretical postulates of the diaspora literature, which argue that, in most cases, war or a conflict in the homeland created a critical juncture that often led to a splash of diaspora activism, including a high degree of political advocacy focused on the homeland (Winland 2007).

From the outset, the diaspora's post-2013 advocacy was associated with unanimous support for the Euromaidan in Ukraine. In 2013, the UCC campaigned to make Yanukovych sign the Ukraine–EU Association agreement. When he refused to do so, the diaspora was among the first to ask the Canadian government to intervene, stressing that, at that time, Ukraine was sliding towards authoritarianism. In November 2013, as the waves of protest embraced the Ukrainian capital, Ukrainian Canadians organised their own local rallies in every major city where Ukrainian Canadians resided. The UCC formed a special committee called EuroMaidan Canada (initiated by Markian Swec, head of EuroMaidan Canada Committee in Toronto), whose task was to organise mass protests and inform Canadian society about developing events in Ukraine.

Under the Harper government, the Ukrainian diaspora leadership received an unprecedented high level of access to the prime minister, which started before the Maidan protests erupted but intensified by the end of 2013. The UCC President Paul Grod – recognised, due to the diaspora's effective engagement with the Canadian government over the situation in Ukraine, as one of the top 100 most influential individuals of the year in Canadian politics – held numerous meetings with Steven Harper and accompanied Canada's officials on their formal visits to Ukraine. In particular, Grod was present during Minister of Foreign Affairs Baird's two trips to Kyiv (during and after the EuroMaidan), and followed him to the by Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) ministerial meeting in December 2013 and during other official visits. According to my interview with Paul Grod, in some cases it was not the UCC that sought out the government's attention but *vice versa*.

Despite the key role played by large institutionalised diaspora structures like the UCC in orchestrating the pro-Ukraine advocacy, credit must be given to important initiatives from diaspora politicians. However, this case study asserts that many of these latter, despite representing rival political parties, overall worked in congruence with other diaspora players in lobbying for common issues. For example, one of the most significant pieces of Canadian legislation that focused on helping Ukraine was the Sergey Magnitsky Law (Bill S-226). Implemented on 2 October 2017, Canada's international sanctions law against human rights violators and corrupt foreign officials all over the world is named in honour of Sergey Magnitsky, the Russian political prisoner who died in a Russian prison in 2009. It began as an independent initiative of British financier Bill Browder, Sergey Magnitsky's ex-employer, who has done extensive lobbying both in the USA and, later, in Canada and whose initiative was supported by three well-known Canadian politicians of Ukrainian descent with active ties to the Ukrainian community: Senator Raynell Andreychuk, Conservative Party MP James Bezan and Liberal MP Borys Wrzesnewskyj. All worked toward getting the legislation passed in the House.[4] As human rights law, it was initially created to sanction officials of any foreign country involved in violations of human rights. Although the Magnitsky Law is not considered an openly pro-Ukraine initiative, it was supported largely by pro-Ukrainian politicians, lobbied for by the UCC and understood as a pro-Ukrainian political instrument by the Canadian mass media and an anti-Russian one by Russian officials.

The protests, rallies and humanitarian activism that took place in Canada have become a coherent supplement to the burst of civic activism in Ukraine. Interviews with organisers of EuroMaidan Canada commonly showed that the initiative united Ukrainian Canadians of different waves and generations, engaging those layers of Ukrainian Canadians who had previously hardly shown any interests in organised diaspora life. This turned the diaspora into a powerful civil force.

As the War in Ukraine became a reality, EuroMaidan Canada's main focus was to organise a massive fundraising campaign that helped to send humanitarian aid to the frontline and civilians. Numerous local Ukrainian diaspora groups across Canada were focused on organising the fundraising campaign to support the army and people of Ukraine and on mounting political rallies to draw attention to the country. The Canada Ukraine Foundation (CUF) became one of the leading groups that coordinated medical and humanitarian aid to war-torn Ukraine. Later, as the tragic sequence of events that took place in Ukraine faded into the past, many EuroMaidan Canada groups slowly ceased to exist. Interview-based evidence suggests that many diaspora activists have become weary and disappointed, primarily with the slow progress of reforms in Ukraine, the difficulty of contacting the Ukrainian authorities and the process of getting through the Ukrainian bureaucratic machine. As the war in Eastern Ukraine transformed into a long-lasting conflict fueled by Russian arms and military support, events in Ukraine and public rallies organised in the diaspora stopped receiving the media attention they had garnered at the outset.

Citing numerous interviews, the war and EuroMaidan also provided a huge opportunity for many diaspora organisations and, first and foremost, for the UCC, to increase their visibility to a level they would not have been able to attain without the political calamities occurring in the homeland. The Maidan and the war promoted not only the UCC but also other diaspora organisations within it – specifically the CUF which not only became the UCC's number one partner in providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine but also turned into a more influential player among Ukrainian diaspora organisations, one example of which was the invitation in 2015 by PM Harper to be a guest at fund-raising events.

Another point that needs to be made is that the tumultuous events in Ukraine, despite having affected the general mobilisation for the cause, were unable to change the *status quo* in the diaspora leadership structure. Despite the fact that the recent, fourth wave of immigrants showed an interest in participating in EuroMaidan protests, humanitarian aid drives and other war-related activities, very few of them joined the ranks of the UCC's leadership, which was considered the key player in advocacy. To date, the vast majority of diaspora

leaders and core members are represented by individuals who are descendants of older waves of immigrants.[5] New immigrants' low level of participation in the diaspora leadership constitutes an entire topic for new research.

The post-Maidan events were followed by the occupation of Crimea and by Russian aggression in the Donbas, which naturally redefined the main objectives of the diaspora's advocacy. If, previously, the diaspora's main emphasis had been on keeping Ukraine on Canada's list of top foreign policy priorities – ensuring continuous support for democratic and economic development and providing Ukraine with humanitarian aid – after the Maidan the focus shifted toward sustaining Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political and diplomatic advocacy in order to oppose Putin's aggression and toward providing military aid and rehabilitation.

What observable outcomes have there been of the official diaspora's accomplishments in the period from the eruption of protests in Ukraine in 2013 to the end of the Harper government in 2015? Before answering this question, it needs to be made clear that the EuroMaidan protests and the subsequent active phase of the Russian annexation of the Crimea and the war in Donbas overlapped with the Harper majority government in Canada. First and foremost, this period was known for Canada's pro-Ukrainian rhetoric. Prime Minister Harper became the first Western politician to voice concern openly to President Putin regarding the occupation of the Crimea, in what was reported as his 'get out of Ukraine' comment (CBC 2014). Harper's official statement assured the diaspora that Ukraine remained Canada's top foreign policy priority. His rhetoric was further validated by sanctions imposed by the Canadian government against the Kremlin and Putin's inner circle, partly as a result of advocacy efforts.[6]

Canada's reaction to the situation in Ukraine also resulted in substantial material support through sizeable financial, humanitarian and military aid. Observable financial support included funds allocated for the following needs: a $200 million stabilisation loan to Ukraine, disparate payments toward a political and security-monitoring mission to Ukraine (such as the $775,000 by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe or OSCE), funds for sending election-observer missions for the presidential elections in Ukraine deployed through an NGO known as Canadian Election Observation Missions (CANEOM) and the OSCE (*Ukrainian Weekly* 2016). In 2015, Canada announced additional support to Ukraine totalling more than $50 million (*Ukrainian Weekly* 2016), including funds to promote the growth of dairy and grain producers in the home country and to support democracy and institution-building there.

Canada's military support, announced in August 2014, included non-lethal military assistance such as different types of gear, the establishment of operation UNIFIER (the Canadian Armed Forces mission established in 2015 to support the Security Forces of Ukraine) and the transfer of images from the Canadian RADARSAT-2 satellite to Ukrainian military forces to help them track down the movements of pro-Russian military groups. What the diaspora could not achieve during Harper's tenure was Canada's agreement to sending defensive weapons for Ukraine.

The majority of diaspora interviewees highlighted Harper's exceptional interest in helping Ukraine and his alignment with the diaspora's cause. It comes as no surprise that Harper's vigorous stand on behalf of Ukraine and unprecedented attention to the Ukrainian issue have been interpreted by certain scholars (Carment and Landry 2016) as his unique strategy of courting the Ukrainian vote in Canada. Specifically, they argued that this shift in policies towards diaspora groups occurred in 2011, when the Conservatives won a majority government: the Maidan and Russian aggression gave Harper a political opportunity for closer relations with the diaspora. These closer ties promised more votes from Ukrainian Canadians. Others, like Kordan (2018), saw the major reason behind Harper's fervent support of Ukraine in his ideological views, which significantly overlapped with the diaspora's appeals.

Without rejecting the two arguments above, my position is that, without the organised diaspora's agency, including its self-promotion as a politically valuable group, consistent soliciting of the government's attention and, even more importantly, strategic crafting of the message being sent, Ukraine would not have received the attention and achieved the support it eventually did. Evidence indicates that the theoretically prevalent idea that a congruence of diaspora–state interests leads straight to a diaspora's influence can only be effective when the latter's agency is activated. In other words, diasporic agency needs particular attention and constitutes a key element in explaining its influence. In order to strengthen this argument, the following section analyses the diaspora's communication and advocacy strategy in greater details.

The diaspora's political communication strategies

According to Alex Marland, communication practices are becoming an increasingly important issue for influential political players (Marland 2016). Scholars researching interest groups consider diasporas to be identity-based political actors whose ultimate goal is to gain political clout and leverage, which should comply with the commonly accepted rules of the game applied to other interest groups.

Despite the historical and overall good standing of the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada, it must continue to perform as an industrious lobbyist if it is to capture the attention of its political elites and the general public. Evidence indicates that the Maidan and the war have not only affected the scope and urgency of the advocacy practices applied by different local Ukrainian diaspora actors but, according to data collected through in-depth interviews, have also added more vigour and creativity to their approaches when dealing with different stakeholders.

The Maidan and the war made many diaspora players resort to strategising their messages in their advocacy for Ukraine, messages which it is important to analyse in order to prove the above. What were the key elements in the diaspora's messages during the war period? Analysing the numerous official statements made by the key organisation in the lobby, the UCC, we can see that these have consisted of a number of patterns, traceable in the messages they have communicated both to the general public and to the state. Both general and specific post-Maidan-related elements of the diaspora's messages need to be considered. The general message is often composed of the following elements:

- Ukraine is an important partner for Canada and has been so since 1991;
- the UCC is an organisation that represents the interests of 1.4 million Ukrainian Canadians who are, first and foremost, Canadian citizens;
- the Ukrainian community is strong and numerous;
- the Ukrainian diaspora is a respectful part of Canadian society, a well-established one that has contributed much to Canada's well-being; and
- Ukrainians Canadians have contributed to multiculturalism.[7]

The consistency with which this message is disseminated is worth emphasising: it appeared in almost every official communiqué. The message promotes the idea of a single and united community whose background justifies its demands. However, the idea of a single united community should not be understood literally but, rather, as a tactical tool to increase the sense of political weight of ethnic communities (Breton and Reitz 2005). In fact, most of my interviewees who were diaspora activists themselves acknowledged that they did not believe in the idea of a single united community but saw it as a purely rhetorical means to boost the image of the community in the eyes of the general public.

Another point that has to be made is that the UCC's official message was carefully drafted in order to avoid any negative connection with the diaspora's ethnic nationalism and blunt the impression that it was focusing on a foreign cause. This was done by emphasising the 'normality' and political proactiveness of the Ukrainian

Canadians as a group. One recent UCC initiative, a community priorities survey, is an excellent case in point. In 2019, the UCC conducted the survey to determine the key public policy themes leading up to the Canadian federal elections. In the survey, the members of the Ukrainian community were asked what issues were important for them. While asking very specific Ukraine or diaspora-related questions, the surveys also included questions of general political interest such as – *inter alia* – how to fight online hate and propaganda, social problems and Canada's immigration policies. Its results were widely publicised and discussed during meetings with representatives of all political parties. This survey is an example of a strategic tool that serves a twofold purpose: to inform politicians about the Ukrainian community's needs and priorities and, simultaneously, to indicate the UCC's capacity to reach out to its people. A party leaders survey is another older instrument that has been used by the UCC during the last two federal elections. The point of this survey was to ask federal party leaders to respond to questions and declare their positions on Ukraine and community-related matters. It thus reached out to all political parties in a consistent way. To be sure, very few ethnic communities in Canada use such a tool to reach out to political parties, which indicates the Ukrainian diaspora's high level of political activity.

Aligning the political message with the government

From the outset, the dramatic EuroMaidan protests received extensive media coverage and remained on the front pages of numerous Canadian and international media outlets for months. The high salience of the motive behind the diaspora advocacy campaigns was beyond question and played a not unimportant role in the diaspora's advocacy success. Essentially, the EuroMaidan Ukraine's democratic revolution and the Russia–Ukraine war that followed symbolised all that Canada had been advocating: respect for territorial integrity, democracy and human rights, all of which were at stake in Ukraine.

With the outbreak of the Revolution of Dignity and the conflict in Ukraine, the diaspora's rhetoric started paying precise attention to how it depicted events there. In particular, when the Russian aggression against Ukraine unfolded, the UCC as well as other pro-Ukrainian lobbyists stressed that the Ukrainian people were bravely defending their right to freedom so 'the cause of the Ukrainian people is the cause of free peoples' (UCC electronic newsletter). The diaspora's message also emphasised that the commitment of the Ukrainian people to democracy was clear and that, during the Revolution of Dignity, they had paid a high price for this freedom. The diaspora showed that freedom and democracy were at stake in Ukraine. The occupation of Crimea and the ongoing military aggression in Eastern Ukraine were linked to human rights abuses and therefore should draw Canada's attention; supporting Ukraine would boost Canada's influence as a country that stands for democracy, freedom and peace. The Ukrainian World Congress actively identified itself as an organisation committed to supporting democracy in Ukraine. All in all, the message clearly appealed to the idea that Canada's assistance to Ukraine should be considered a natural outcome and noble cause in itself because it was congruent with Canadian values and declared national interests.

The diaspora's way of communicating its cause was focused on making sure that Ukraine's interests were aligned with Canadian national interests and agenda. Canada's long record of being a country that stands for democracy, human rights and sovereignty was invoked. The diaspora's message emphasised that helping Ukraine was in tune with Canada's long-established commitment to this country – the first Western country to recognise Ukraine's independence and its long record of helping Ukraine to achieve democratisation (Koinova 2009; Kordan 2018). Over a decade ago, when the Orange Revolution was unfolding, the UCC had been instrumental in persuading the Canadian government to send bilateral electoral observer missions (EOM) as a vehicle for the democratisation of Ukraine.[8] Since the beginning of the 1990s, the UCC saw its role as helping persuade the Canadian government to prioritise Ukraine as a recipient of Canadian International Development

Assistance (CIDA). Since the mid-1990s, Canada has been among Ukraine's top 10 international donors and a large number of its programmes in Ukraine have focused on democratisation, good governance and economic reform projects.[9]

The diaspora's strategic communication techniques were not the only strategies used. The urgency of events in the homeland mobilised the diaspora leadership to develop a number of new but politically well-considered initiatives. For instance, the celebration of Vyshyvanka Day[10] is one instance of many organised diaspora initiatives that began after the EuroMaidan protests. Initiated from below by Canada–Ukraine Parliamentary Program interns as a day of solidarity with Ukraine, Vyshyvanka Day was primarily supported by Canadian–Ukrainian ethnic politicians, then later by diaspora organisations and the Ukrainian Embassy. This event is an excellent example of the symbolic annual post-Maidan flash mob that captured the attention of both the mass media and Canadian politicians. In 2016, to cite another example, the diaspora turned the criticism of the Ukrainian Canadian community by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v =SMzytIxknBc) into a global media campaign that has grown into a global eponymous hashtag #*RabidUkrainianDiaspora* as a countermeasure for the Russian propaganda machine.

During the first years after the Maidan, the UCC launched an information project called Ukraine Crisis Daily Brief, a daily e-newsletter that included exhaustive information in regard to new developments in Ukraine. Other projects that were born in the midst of the Ukrainian crisis were less visible to the public eye but no less important, as they were designed to boost the community's internal synchronisation, capacity-building and readiness for action. Among them was Project Link, launched to increase the political clout of the Ukrainian community by creating a better connection between the community, MPs and their ridings. Maidan and the war needed the UCC to diversify its information campaigns by including different means of informing its own community members as well as those politicians and community experts who are targeted as its recipients.

That being said and as many interviews indicated, despite the above efforts, the path of events unfolding especially during 2013–2014 in Ukraine made it difficult for the UCC, as well as for other actors, to plan advocacy ahead of time. There was only enough time to react to events and take decisions in an *ad hoc* manner. Had the diaspora's institutionalised players not already elaborated a high degree of professionalism in advocacy prior to the events in Ukraine, it would have been more difficult for them to sustain cohesive advocacy during the most dramatic years.

Advocacy in the post-Harper era: the Liberals and the Ukrainian cause

In the post-2015 period, most of the Ukrainian diaspora's agenda followed a path-dependency trajectory: it continued being related to challenges to Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, to deterring Russia's aggression, offering humanitarian support and encouraging Canada's diplomatic advocacy for Ukraine in the international arena.

Despite the gradually decreasing interest in Ukraine in the mass media, Canada's official support for the country did not decline when, in 2015, Harper lost the federal elections and the Liberal Party headed by Justin Trudeau came to power. Some media experts viewed the UCC's successful advocacy campaigns during the Maidan as associated with Harper's patronage of the Ukrainian community and predicted that support might end when the Liberal Party took over. However, that did not happen: as the war in Ukraine continued, the UCC worked with a new government strategically, extending the approach taken when the conflict started by keeping Ukraine at the forefront of Canadian foreign policy. This very fact circumvents two popular arguments that Ukraine, during the Harper government's term, was supported solely due to either Harper's unique ideological imperative or his strategic pragmatic penchant for buying the votes of Ukrainian Canadians.

Support for Ukraine by Trudeau's Liberals not only continued but greatly solidified. The diaspora's major victories in that period could be boiled down to the following policy outcomes: Ukraine continued to receive the financial, military and diplomatic assistance that the diaspora advocated. With the election of Trudeau's Liberal government, Canada's new Minister for International Development, Marie-Claud Bibeau, initiated a process of changing Canada's priorities for international assistance, shifting attention towards poverty alleviation and gender-related issues. This would have moved Ukraine from a country of focus for CIDA to the verge of being cut from developmental assistance as a country that no longer matched Canada's priorities. In an interview in December 2019, ex-UCC President Paul Grod clearly stressed the role which the diaspora played in assuring that Ukraine kept receiving assistance: 'We spent quite a bit of time working on this matter with the minister and MPs, explaining to them that they still need to help Ukraine to ensure its democratic institutions are really solidified'. Largely as a result of the diaspora's actions, Ukraine continued receiving development assistance. However, the outcome could have been different had the diaspora stopped its advocacy.

In 2016, Ukraine revived additional assistance to support the humanitarian needs of the conflict-affected population in Eastern Ukraine in the form of $13 million (US$ 9.7 million) promised by Trudeau in a visit to Ukraine (*Ukrainian Weekly* 2017). As for military support, the diaspora lobbied for and achieved the following milestones: renewal of operation UNIFIER twice, in 2017 and 2019; the continuation of strong military training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces through UNIFIER since 2015; adding Ukraine to the Automatic Firearms Country Control List (AFCCL) in 2017 and lifting an arms embargo on Ukraine; finally, new funding to support the National Police of Ukraine through training and equipment, thanks to the award by Canada of $8.1 million. The ratification of the Canada–Ukraine Free Trade Agreement was another important achievement that the diaspora had lobbied for.

All the above policy outcomes, actively advocated by the diaspora lobby for years, were eventually achieved. This, according to Helboe Pedersen's (2013) definition of the lobby's influence, provides valid grounds for considering the diaspora an influential political lobby.

Many interviewees claim that the level of political access which the diaspora achieved during Harper's tenure was unprecedented and has not been equalled under Trudeau. However, the above facts indicate that, during the Trudeau government, Ukraine has not been neglected. UCC representatives have still accompanied Canadian official delegations to Ukraine, have been continuously consulted and their opinions solicited.

As a result of the above policy achievements, many diaspora-related actors have claimed victories. The variety of 'diaspora-associated' actors makes it difficult to analyse just whose contribution is the most substantial in the policy victories achieved. Specifically, the post-Harper period in Canadian politics was directly associated with the emergence of two key Ukrainian Canadians: Chrystia Freeland – who was appointed to the rank of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador Roman Waschuk.

The negotiations for the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA) started years earlier under PM Steven Harper but it was during Freeland's tenure that Ukraine and Canada finalised the Free Trade Agreement and saw a prolongation of Canada–Ukraine military cooperation. In 2017 Canada lifted the embargo on Ukraine on the purchase of lethal weapon by adding it to the Automatic Firearms Country Control List (AFCCL). Freeland deserves special credit for the organisation of the Ukraine Reform Conference in Toronto in 2019. Her appointment in 2017 was preceded by the no-less-valuable appointment of Roman Waschuk in 2014 to the position of Canada's Ambassador to Ukraine. He played an instrumental role in developing diaspora–Government of Canada relations. Specifically, evidence suggests that it was Roman Waschuk's initiative to hold frequent briefings of European diplomats on the situation in Ukraine at the height of its conflict with Russia. The chair of EuroMaidan Canada, Markian Swec, stressed that, for the EuroMaidan activists, former Ambassador Waschuk played an extremely important role as mediator: during the most difficult years during

and after the Maidan, he helped activists to stay informed about the most recent developments in Ukraine by distinguishing fake information from true facts.[11]

Indeed, the Canadian diplomatic support for which the Ukrainian diaspora lobbied was truly multi-faceted. However, without the personal agency of the above individuals, certain initiatives would perhaps never have materialised. It is significant that what unites both Waschuk and Freeland and the majority of key diaspora entrepreneurs is that they are all descendants of the third wave of post-World War II Ukrainian refugees, a mature and a well-established faction of the diaspora community.[12] They are highly active in advocacy and have strong ties to the Ukrainian community. The presence of such individuals of Ukrainian origin in Canadian politics obviously blurs the lines between the diaspora and the Canadian government but, in this particular case, they should be conceptualised as a variation of diasporic agency.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been twofold: first, to enhance theoretical knowledge of how homeland conflicts can affect a diaspora's mobilisation and advocacy patterns; second, to contribute to our empirical knowledge and deepen our understanding of the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada as a political actor.

The nature of trigger events in the homeland – the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, followed by Russia's invasion of the Donbas – all had a unique effect on the group's mobilisation and the advocacy's effectiveness. They provided an exceptional opportunity to accelerate the engagement of Ukrainian Canadians representing all waves of migration in advocacy work toward the homeland. As a result, the synchronisation of the diaspora's involvement with Ukraine's civil society dynamics has appeared. Without doubt, the events in Ukraine added an urgency and creativity to existing patterns of political work and lifted the political visibility of many diaspora organisations, something that eventually strengthened the diaspora's role as an official party with a say in negotiating Canada–Ukraine relations. However, even though the Revolution of Dignity and later invasions by Russia came as a shock to many and the way in which events unfolded did not leave much time for the diaspora to react, by the time they happened, the organised diaspora had already developed the organisational capacity to lead advocacy work with a high degree of confidence and professionalism.

This case study shows that the influence of the Ukrainian diaspora is not an exaggeration invented by Canadian pundits. The diaspora's success in advocating for the Ukrainian cause is the result of a number of interconnected factors: the lobby's organisational capacity (the diaspora's agency), the salience of the Maidan and the Russian invasion as extraordinary international events, the absence of a competing lobby group for the opposing cause and, finally, the alignment of the diaspora's interests with those of the state. These factors are all applicable to this case study and are not mutually exclusive, so they can be considered in tandem or as mutually reinforcing factors that explain the lobby's success or failure. However, a closer look at the unique dynamics of this case study leads to the following conclusions. First, the congruence of diaspora–state interests is not achievable without the diaspora's active involvement in advocacy work. Second, the homeland event, no matter how powerful, may have no effect on foreign policy decision-makers, unless these events are 'delivered' in a meaningful way – an outcome that largely depends on diasporic agency. This latter should be understood as a number of factors taken together: active political work, the organisational capacity of diaspora institutions and the presence of influential individuals in top policy decision-making positions.

The third important observation is related to the nature of the requests that the diaspora solicits: if it has already succeeded in obtaining a positive outcome on similar previous requests (like the provision of funds for democracy in Ukraine through CIDA), or has helped Canada to enhance its international image (sanctions

against Russia, rhetorical support of Ukraine, financial assistance to mitigate humanitarian crises etc.) then the probability of receiving approval for funds for the same purpose increases disproportionally.

To sum up, the power of the homeland crisis has produced a boost of energy for Ukrainian Canadians, allowing them to move forward; however, the effective advocacy that has come as a result is, instead, a product of time and evolution and was not born overnight.

Notes

[1] Diaspora activists often refer to the 1.4 million people who claim Ukrainian origin automatically as members of the Ukrainian diaspora. For practical matters, they use the notion of ethnicity adopted by statisticians and diaspora interchangeably. For Statistics Canada, a Ukrainian Canadian is a person who declares his or her ethnic patrilineage and identifies single or multiple ethnic identities as Ukrainian. In this paper the concept of diaspora and ethnicity are not equated. Without a doubt, not all 1.4 million Canadians of Ukrainian origin could be technically classified as members of the diaspora.

[2] The Ukrainian Canadian Congress (hereinafter referred as the UCC) is an umbrella organisation founded in 1941 and originally known as the Ukrainian Canadian Committee. As a coordinating body, it unites the majority of legally registered national, provincial and local Ukrainian organisations across Canada. The UCC has 6 provincial councils, 16 local branches and over 30 national member organisations. For the history of UCC see Martynowych (2016).

[3] For a list compiled by the UCC of Canadian MPs who officially claim Ukrainian descent see https://www.ucc.ca/2015/10/20/ucc-congratulates-pm-designate-justin-trudeau-and-welcomes-eleven-ukrainian-canadians-elected-to-parliament/ (accessed: 22 February 2020).

[4] In 2016, Bill Browder, Vladimir Kara-Murza, Zhanna Nemtsova and Gary Kasparov formed a lobby group who travelled to Ottawa to meet with Canada's key MPs and Senators and appeared before Committee on the issue. Although Bill S-226 'Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act' was formally introduced by Senator Raynell Andreychuk, there were other people involved in the campaign, including the Hon. John McKay MP and Marcus Kolga, a Toronto-based journalist.

[5] Most are descendants of the third wave of post-World War II Ukrainian refugees or, according to Satzewich's (2002) classification, a 'victim diaspora'. This latter refers to those who immigrated to Canada as refugees after World War II, in the period between 1948 and 1953 and whose political mobilisation and advocacy have, for many years, been around specific issues such as the glorification of Ukrainian participation in World War II and the drawing of attention to the Ukrainian Famine (Holodomor) as a genocide of the Ukraine people.

[6] The first line of sanctions (e.g. special economic measure regulations) imposed by Canada against Russian came into force in March 2014. The later amendments to the regulations occurred in 2015, 2016 and 2019. See the Government of Canada's official information: https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/sanctions/russia-russie.aspx?lang=eng (accessed: 22 February 2020).

[7] They often refer to the legacy of the Ukrainian Canadian Senator Paul Yuzyk (in office during 1963–1986), known as a 'father of multiculturalism' for his advocacy for the concept of multiculturalism.

[8] Bilateral EOMs (since 2004) were funded by Canada through CIDA, while the UCC's own independent electoral observer missions (since 1994) were self-funded by diaspora organisations.

[9] According to the ProAid portal, in the period from Ukraine's declaration of independence to the present day the country received over 180 million dollars worth of international assistance from Canada, see http://proaid.gov.ua/uk/donors/20 (accessed: 22 February 2020).

[10] Vyshyvanka (Embroidery) Day on the Hill is associated with a flash mob that takes place every year on 17 May in front of the parliament building in Ottawa and during which politicians and Ukrainian community leaders symbolise solidarity with Ukraine by wearing embroidered shirts.

[11] In his interview (December 2019) Markian Shwec stressed that, since activists never wanted to become a source of fake information, they always found it important, when giving interviews to the Canadian mass media on the situation in Ukraine, to have a source of true, verifiable information in Kyiv.

[12] Here I mean key members of UCC (board members), certain diaspora politicians and independent activists. Most of these individuals, in their interviews, highlighted their common values, high political activism and attendance at Ukrainian institutes and groups etc.

Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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— ARTICLES —

Migration for Achievement: The Life Strategies of Skilled IT Migrants from Ukraine in Australia

Olga Oleinikova*

Based on 25 interviews with high-skilled migrants, this article examines the migration of IT professionals from Ukraine in Australia. Their migration experience – identified as 'migration for achievement' – is examined in three ways. First, the article sets out the structural context for migration and the formation of the achievement life strategy: (1) the emergence and growth of the IT industry in Ukraine, in combination with (2) shifts in Australian migration policy triggered by the growth of the innovation economy and demand for highly skilled migrants. Second, it examines migration decision-making and the individual motivations, values, aims and agency of migrants. Third, the article explores how achievement life strategies are recreated or transformed after migration by looking into the migrants' adaptation, occupational outcomes, language and national identity, future plans and aspirations. The narratives of the 'achievement migrants' in Australia form a story of well-integrated members of Australian society and active agents of social and economic life. Given their capacity to successfully maintain their social and economic status after migration, along with their positive contributions to Australian society in terms of social cohesion, innovation and economic production, this group can be considered a 'brain-gain' for Australia.

Keywords: skilled migrants, post-independence Ukrainian migration, Australia, achievement life strategy, IT professionals

Introduction

The mainstream literature on international migration in the Asia-Pacific region explores numerous aspects of cross-country mobility: migration in a global context within the development of capitalism, colonial expansion and imperialism (Castles 2010; Castles and Miller 2009; Massey 1988; Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci,

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Pellegrino and Taylor 1998; O'Reilly 2012); skilled migration as a 'substantial contribution' to the workforce in the era of globalisation (Arunachalam and Healy 2009; Florida 2005; Hugo 2004; Kuptsch and Pang 2006); academic mobility as 'brain mobility' (Bauder 2003; Kenway and Fahey 2006, 2009; Williams 2006); family, social networks and migration (Castles 2010; Gill and Bialski 2011; Kennedy 2004; Scott 2007; Vertovec 2002); migration policy (Arunachalam and Healy 2009; Boucher 2013; Hawthorne 2005; Hugo 2006a, 2006b; Markus, Jupp and McDonald 2009).

This article addresses an area outside mainstream migration studies – the life strategies of migrants in Australia. Using the example of post-independence Ukrainian migration to Australia, the article discerns and explains the pathways of skilled migrants through the analysis of their life strategies, which are the outcomes of their personal characteristics and individual actions as well as of structural frames and conditions. The post-independence Ukrainian migration to Australia is an understudied phenomenon (Oleinikova 2020). Given the lack of knowledge or substantive research about Ukrainian migration to Australia and the absence of studies about the post-independence Ukrainian migration period (Oleinikova 2017), this study is unique in its investigation of the reasons, motivations, values, sense of agency and future plans (all the elements that build up an individual's life strategy) behind the arrival of Ukrainian skilled IT migrants. The focus is on migration in the period between 2004 and 2013, which presents a particular interest for research as, between these years, skilled arrivals from Ukraine in Australia were recorded to be the highest in number since the 1950s (Oleinikova 2020). Furthermore, in this period, IT professionals from Ukraine experienced particularly favourable conditions for immigration to Australia and unfavourable conditions for staying in Ukraine. These structural conditions on both sides encouraged young Ukrainian professionals to search for ways to control their lives and implement their life strategies with the help of migration.

With the intention of presenting empirical evidence on how skilled migrants coped with the challenges of the post-Soviet transition in Ukraine and how they shaped their life strategies both before and after migration, this article utilises an integrated life-strategy research perspective to explore agency and structure. This combination solves the macro/micro-complex problem by suggesting that the concept of life strategy enriches our understanding of how structural contexts facilitate or impede individual life strategies and how the cohort of skilled IT migrants became active agents of their biographies through migration.

First, the article explains the life-strategy conceptual framework and methodology, before setting out the structural context for migration and the formation of the achievement life strategy. Then, relying on the interview data, it examines migration decision-making and the individual context of the motivations, aims, values and agency that were formed while in Ukraine. Next, the article explores how achievement life strategy is recreated after migration by looking into the migrants' adaptation, occupational outcomes, national identity, future plans and satisfaction with migration. Finally, the article concludes that the narratives of the skilled IT migrants form a story of well-integrated members of Australian society, active agents of social and economic life, who demonstrate an effective usage of the new opportunities that emerge in the recipient environment. Given their capacity to successfully maintain their social and economic status after migration, as well as their positive contribution to Australian society in terms of social cohesion, innovation and economic production, this group can be considered as having the potential to impact on the situation in Ukraine from afar.

The life-strategy conceptual framework

Central to the structure/agency of the life-strategy research framework is the definition of life strategy as suggested by Reznik (1995) and further developed in Reznik and Smirnov (2002): a life strategy is a dynamic, self-adjusting system of socio-cultural presentations that orients individuals' behaviour throughout a protracted

period of life. The dynamic life strategies of skilled migrants were analysed across temporal and spatial dimensions. The temporal layer was used to investigate how life strategies are shaped in a particular period of migration (between 2004 and 2013). The emphasis is on these particular years, as the skilled arrivals from Ukraine in Australia noticeably increased in this specific period and are seen as the mainstream of the arrivals of 'achievement migrants'. The spatial layer was then used to conduct analysis across Ukraine and Australia. Within this framework, migration is understood from a wider perspective to be a tool used to assist in the implementation of a life strategy that is designed to help an individual cope with socio-economic and political changes in Ukraine and build pathways in Australia according to their motivations, values and sense of agency. The category of 'skilled migrant'[1] is used to describe the group of actors whose life strategies are examined.

Though the concept of the life strategy is constantly under-utilised by mainstream international migration and post-Soviet transition scholarship (exceptions include Geisen 2013; Mrozowicki 2011; Volodko 2007), a life-strategy approach helps researchers to 'gai[n] new insights on migrants as social actors' (Geisen 2013: 1). The life-strategy research framework used here relies on a structure–agency theoretical approach that was developed through a combination of the existing research on the most typical social-life practices and the role of the agency of people originating from the post-Soviet states (Golovakha and Panina 2006; Kutsenko 2004; Kutsenko and Babenko 2004; Naumova 1995; Zaslavskaya 1999; Zaslavskaya and Yadov 2008) and a modification of the typologies of life strategies suggested by Eastern European (Ukrainian and Russian) scholars (Babenko 2004; Belyaeva 2001; Naumova 1995; Reznik 1995; Reznik and Reznik 1996; Zlobina and Tykhonovych 2001). Taking as its central standpoint the differentiation between the micro and the macro dimensions that shape life strategies, this approach has two scopes: agency/content and structure/context. Within the life-strategy research framework these two scopes will be referred to as the 'individual content of life strategy' for the analysis of values, aims, needs and agency and the 'structural context of life strategy' for the analysis of the events on which the life strategy was formed. The ground-breaking approach to the combination of structure and agency was made by Giddens in his work on the theory of structuration (1979), where he describes structure and agency theories as two sides of the same coin: structures make social action possible and social action creates and transforms structures. Giddens calls it the 'duality of structure' and develops a stratification model of social action. According to Giddens' (1984: 5) 'stratification model of human action', individuals are knowledgeable within the constraints and opportunities presented by social structures. The interplay between structure and agency is viewed as key to understanding the complex phenomenon of life-strategy formation and implementation in the context of migration. Both agency and structure are critical to the life-strategy perspective. The kind of aims, needs, values and sense of agency that Ukrainian migrants possess largely depends on the direction of the post-Soviet regime transition and migration policy regulations. I understand structure to be the space where agency is being enacted. This space is represented by economic structures, government politics, national and international events and policy that regulates migration. This is the space in which participants build their life strategies.

In the life-strategy scholarship there is no commonly agreed opinion on the key structuring elements that build up the individual context of life strategy. Abulkhanova- Slavskaya (2001) argued that life strategy includes three components: (1) the value component (as an expression of immaterial–material values), (2) the purpose of life (as a way to retain and implement the achieved position in life), (3) the meaning of life (as a generalised reflection of needs) (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya 2001). According to Golovakha (2000: 267) 'value orientations, life goals and plans form the core of life strategy'. Here, I referr to four micro structuring elements of life strategy: motivations/aims, values, sense of agency and decision-making.

In this study I argue that the life strategies of Ukrainian IT migrants are neither effectively explained by the tripartite typology that Reznik and Reznik (1996) propose, nor the four types of life strategy that Zaslavskaya (1999) identifies in her studies of Russian society on their own. Reznik and Reznik (1996) suggest that there

are three main types of life strategy available to individuals: (1) the welfare strategy, (2) the success strategy and (3) the self-realisation strategy. According to these scholars, the 'welfare strategy' is one of the most common types of life strategy and is characterised by the following features: receptive ('acquisition') activity and reference-group (correlative) consumption, the prevalence of the attitude for acquiring (rather than creating) welfare, the desire for material comfort and maximum life security and the dominance of the image of a stable and peaceful life. The 'success strategy' is seen as a fairly common and appealing type of life strategy, characterised by such features as achievement-driven activity and active life position, transformational activities and a focus on high performance, the ability to live and work in conditions of uncertainty and risk, originality and diversity in the selection and implementation of cultural lifestyles and a steady focus on external recognition and approval from others. The 'self-realisation strategy' is the third type. Reznik and Reznik (1996: 110–119) and later Reznik and Smirnov (2002: 35–36) describe it as being characterised by a conscious and practical orientation of the individual towards creative change and the transformation of his/her own life for the purpose of self-improvement and self-development. At the same time building on her theory of post-Soviet transition, Zaslavskaya (1999) defines four classes of life strategy: (1) achievement, (2) adaptation, (3) regression and (4) destruction.

My life-strategy conceptual framework, which helped to define and classify the life strategies found in the stories of skilled IT migrants, consists of two types of life strategy which appear as the opposites of one another – the dynamic, risk-taking and future-oriented 'achievement life strategy' and the conservative, risk-minimising and survival-oriented 'survival life strategy'. The core of the applied life-strategy typology in this research mainly draws on the integrated developments of Reznik and Reznik (1996) and Babenko (2004), who proposes that the level of adaptation to transition is the strongest indicator of the real social situation and the direction of social development of a society in transition. Babenko (2004) has distinguished four life-strategy types: (1) achievement, (2) adaptation, (3) exclusion and (4) survival.[2] The two-fold modified typology used in my study, consisting of the survival and achievement life-strategy types, provides a space to explore the combination of tools and resources employed in the formation and implementation of the achievement life strategies found to be particularly visible among my skilled IT migrant interviewees.

The first type – the achievement life strategy – in the context of migration is conceptualised as a life-strategy type directed towards achievement, self-realisation, the use of new possibilities (extensive goals) and the extended re-creation of social and economic status (Babenko 2004). The main pre-condition of the achievement strategy is motivational activity ('achievement') serving future professional and self-development and public recognition (Reznik and Reznik 1995).

The second type – the survival life strategy – is a life-strategy type directed towards limited re-creation at the level of physical survival, which also entails a decline in social and economic status and life chances together with self-restraint (Reznik and Reznik 1995). According to these authors, within survival life strategy, individuals set themselves the most accessible aims to provide for their own or their collective (e.g. family) survival needs.

The scholarship suggests that achievement strategies, being dynamic, risk-taking, future-oriented and 'creative', are typical for societies where individualism, free-market economics and pluralism dominate (Oleinikova and Bayeh 2019; Reznik and Reznik 1996). Reznik (1995) suggests that, according to its social and cultural parameters, the achievement life strategy is an essential condition for the existence of Western civil society. The achievement life strategy I examine in this article – as was found in the narratives of all 25 interviewees and as representative of developed Western societies – demonstrates that these skilled IT migrants had already led their pre-migration lives in Ukraine by the individualistic, sovereign, welfare-based and egalitarian standards that are typical in developed democratic societies, where people are not struggling for survival

but, rather, are strong enough to compete for achievement and success. Thus, their integration in the recipient society, in both the professional and the social sense, is smooth and fast.

Methodology

The structure/agency dichotomy maps onto the two methodologies used. The first was the collection and assessment of secondary data resources on both the emergence and growth of the IT market in Ukraine from the mid-2000s and migration policy in Australia. The second involved conducting qualitative interviews that were analysed using a thematic coding approach and a variation of narrative analysis. By bringing together these two different methods, this article presents a comprehensive analysis of the migration of IT professionals from Ukraine to Australia between 2004 and 2013.

The data are drawn from fieldwork conducted in Australia (NSW and Wollongong) from October 2012 to May 2013. The empirical basis for this study is formed by 25 semi-structured interviews with Ukrainian skilled IT immigrants who migrated to Australia, from 2004 on, through the general skilled migration (GSM) programme[3] as ICT skilled professionals. An interview script was developed, consisting of a set of questions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007) which provided a starting point to guide the interaction. The questions were based on the research aims and served as a framework for the thematic analysis of the transcribed texts. Both prospective and retrospective approaches were used to guide the conversation and capture respondents' reflections on the past and their visions for the future. The interview script was guided by a set of five themes, each containing a series of questions that fit into the two approaches. The first four themes were classified as retrospective and were aimed at finding out about the formation and genesis of the existing events or event-structures of the participants in relation to their lives in Ukraine and their arrival in Australia. The fifth theme was classified as a prospective one. The aim of the questions in this theme was to elicit descriptions by the participants of possible and desirable prospects for their lives. Participants were recruited through passive snowballing sampling, avoiding direct contact with potential respondents and recruiting through radio announcements, newspaper ads and introductions through friends and community. All the respondents were assigned pseudonyms to maintain their confidentiality and the study was approved by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The interviews were conducted in various settings – at the participants' residences, in offices, canteens and sometimes even in bars and city parks – and, on average, lasted for 1.5–2 hours. All the participants were very open and willing to share their stories in order to assist in the research. It is important to mention that qualitative methodology recognises that the subjectivity of the researcher is intimately involved in scientific research, as well as the ability of the interviewees to present things not the way they are but the way they wish to present them. This poses unavoidable limitations to this study and needs to be acknowledged.

The participants originated from different Ukrainian regions: 11 were from Eastern and 5 from Western Ukraine, another 5 were from Central Ukraine and 4 came from Southern Ukraine. Of the participants, 17 were men and 8 were women. This gender sampling reflects the gender composition of the ICT industry, where women represent about one third of total ICT employment (Walby, Gottfried, Gottschall and Osawa 2006). As far as their social origins were concerned, 19 interviewees were born into white-collar and 4 into blue-collar working class families, while the remaining 2 interviewees originated from the class of cultural and scientific intelligentsia. Most of the migrants (23 out of 25) had university degrees and all worked professionally in the ICT sector prior to migration. Their average age was 29 years old. Regarding their marital status, 16 were married with no children and 1 was divorced at the time of the interview, while 8 participants were single.

The choice of the case study of the migration of IT professionals to Australia between 2004 and 2013 was informed by two trends: (1) a steady growth in the number of Ukrainian arrivals in Australia over the last decade and (2) the change in the profile of Ukrainian migration to Australia since 2004. In 2004, for the first

time in the overall history of Ukrainian migration to Australia (including that prior to World War I and the waves of post-World War II migration), the number of skilled Ukrainian arrivals outnumbered those who arrived through the family reunion and humanitarian stream (Oleinikova 2020). Out of the 2 470 permanent arrivals between 2004 and 2013, a total of 1 312 migrants came through the skilled stream while only 1 005 came through the family stream (DIAC 2014).[4]

Structural context: the migration of IT professionals from Ukraine to Australia between 2004 and 2013

The IT industry in Ukraine during the early 2000s and the growth of offshoring (outsourcing) in Ukraine after 2003

Before 2003, the IT industry in Ukraine reflected a population that was passive and lethargic in its use of the Internet. After 2002–2003, this shifted significantly to a culture of dot-com start-ups and an orientation towards offshore projects. Offshoring or outsourcing is the practice of hiring external labour to perform necessary business functions in a country other than that in which the products or services are actually being sold. In the case of Ukrainian IT professionals, the offshoring (outsourcing) means that an overseas organisation moves its IT development to Ukraine. As Marko, one of the interviewees, defined it, the 'global downturn and an orientation to offshore customers' caused the Ukrainian IT market to slow down and led to a series of individual bankruptcies of Ukrainian-based corporations delivering IT services onshore. After 2003, the IT industry in Ukraine found its way again and is still growing. From 2003 and for the next nine years the value of Ukrainian-made software development and IT outsourcing services increased tenfold (Ukrainian Hi-Tech Initiative 2012) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The value of IT outsourcing services provided by Ukraine between 2003 and 2011
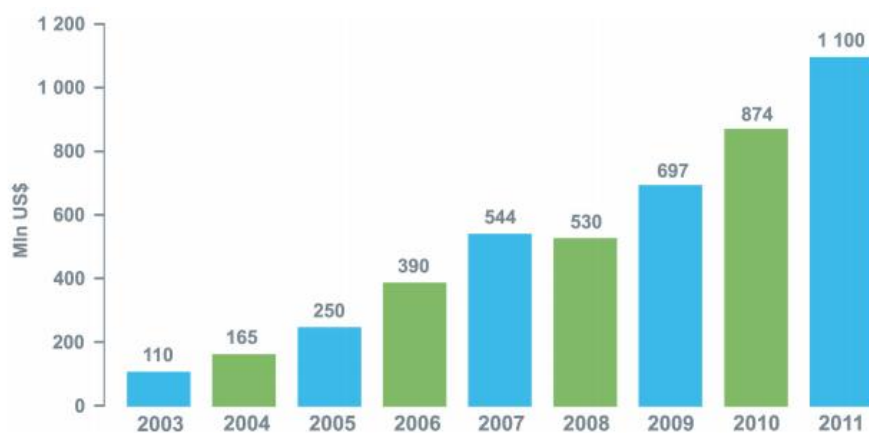
Source: Ukrainian Hi-Tech Initiative (2012).

Today, Ukrainian IT professionals have proved their competence in the global market. The numbers of IT professionals in Ukraine is estimated at between 200 000 and 215 000 people. Each year over 16 000 Ukrainian IT specialists graduate. As a result, in 2013 Ukraine was the most dynamic and the leading IT outsourcing market and talent pool in Central and Eastern Europe (Intellias 2013). In terms of the countries that import Ukrainian IT services, Australia is in 16th place, drawing on 8 per cent of the available Ukrainian-made services (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Key regions for exported IT services

USA — 81%
UK — 64%
Germany — 60%
Netherlands — 41%
Canada — 41%
Denmark — 39%
Norway — 36%
Sweden — 30%
Finland — 28%
Switzerland — 27%
France — 20%
Austria — 20%
Israel — 20%
Belgium — 18%
Spain — 8%
Australia — 8%
Italia — 7%
Ireland — 4%
China — 4%
Japan — 1%
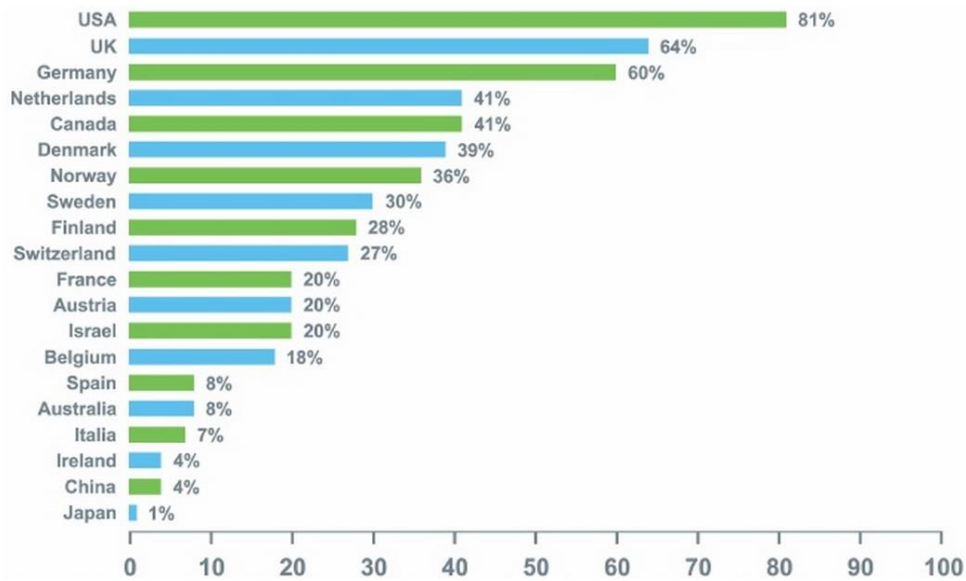
Source: Ukrainian Hi-Tech Initiative (2012).

Shifts in Australian migration policy since 2004

In 2004, for the first time in the history of Ukrainian migration to Australia, the number of Ukrainians who arrived there through the skilled migration stream with permanent status outnumbered humanitarian and family migrants (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Ukrainian permanent arrivals in Australia by migration stream (from 1 January 1991 to 1 January 2014)
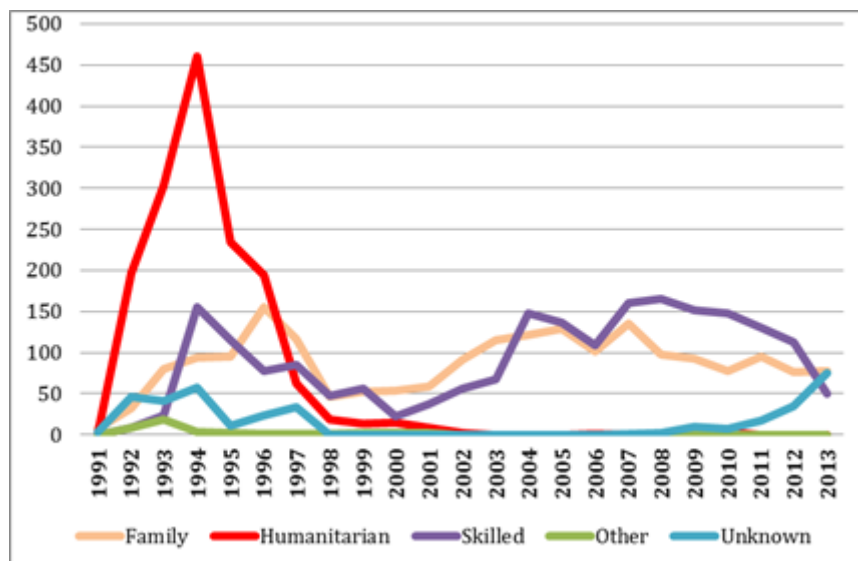
Source: DIAC (2014).

This shift towards skilled arrivals, dominated by IT professionals from Ukraine, was shaped by a significant change to Australia's more-recent migration history. In 2008, the Rudd Labour government announced plans to increase the number of skilled migrants in Australia by 30 per cent from the previous year and this trend for preferring skilled migrants seems to be continuing (Boucher 2013; Markus *et al.* 2009; Oleinikova 2020). Since 2010, Australia's main focus of economic development has shifted from mining and resources to tech-innovation (Oleinikova 2017). This growing demand for skilled migrants attracted IT professionals and engineers from Ukraine.

Another important change in migration policy that created more favourable conditions for Ukrainian IT migration to Australia was the decrease in the country's assessment level for Ukraine. For many years, Ukraine was on the list of countries with an excessive risk of illegal immigration to Australia. According to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's review of visa risk-assessment levels, which took effect on 24 March 2012, Ukraine's assessment level decreased to Level Two, making the procedure for obtaining a visa for Australia easier (DIAC 2012). The following visa categories, more specifically, now require less paperwork for Ukrainians: (1) Subclass 570 – ELICOS (English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students); (2) Subclass 571 – Schools; (3) Subclass 573 – Higher Education; (4) Subclass 574 – Postgraduate Research and (5) Subclass 575 – Non-Award.

Individual content of the achievement life strategy

Motivations/aims

It was in these structural circumstances that the IT professionals made their decisions and plans to move to Australia based on their motivations/aims. Their aims refer to individuals' life goals and motivated activity plans that form the core of the achievement life strategy (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya 2001). Drawing on the 25 narratives of the skilled IT migrants, the following motivations/aims were found to be key to their migration for achievement between 2004 and 2013:

1. the growing competition among IT professionals in Ukraine resulting from the rapid growth of the IT market since 2003;
2. a desire to develop, innovate and grow as employees and professionals;
3. a desire to change from being outsourced labour (available cheaply to developed countries) into well-paid professionals who manage IT projects from the heart of an IT hub;
4. being a well-paid cohort in Ukraine, the awareness that they can earn more Australia; and
5. the stable growth of the Australian IT market, employment shortages in the IT Australian industry and the easy conditions for their skilled immigration.

Given the increasing number of trained IT specialists in Ukraine, it is perhaps not surprising that growing competition among them was the first reason the interviewees gave for choosing to migrate. Marko, Fedir, Panas, Ivan, Oleh, Tamara, Bohdan, Zoya and Maksym all mentioned this as the reason why they applied for permanent residence in Australia through the skilled migration stream. For example, Marko said: 'Since Ukraine became well known for skilled IT professionals, the competition in the Ukrainian ICT industry has started to grow. I took another degree at that time to develop more skills but then I realised that it was better to invest in migration'. However, the issue for the IT group was not just about job competition. The participants listed individual characteristics that suggested that they wanted a particular type of work experience with room for growth and innovation, which was the second factor motivating skilled IT migration to Australia. Borys said he was 'always following new trends and self-education' in his profession. Fedir noted he had 'skills and

a strong self-awareness [of himself] as a professional and a desire to innovate'. Marko said: 'I aim to be an expert in what I do and always search for opportunities to grow as a professional and employee'. The aim of professional growth and development, as drawn from the IT migrants' narratives, was found to originate from the sense of technological abundance in Ukraine.

Marko, Panas and Anatolyi expressed the feeling of technological abundance in Ukraine and a desire for global engagement with the mainstream and cutting-edge IT industry. As, Marko said: 'Being in IT in Ukraine makes you feel abundant by the world. Technologically, Ukraine is laid-back. There is a lack of inspiration for innovations and keeping up with global cutting-edge trends. Australia offers innovation hype vibes and enormous possibilities for career development'.

The third factor that participants said facilitated their skilled migration was their desire to change from being outsourced labour (available cheaply to developed countries) into well-paid professionals who manage IT projects from the heart of an IT hub. Maksym put it well when he reflected that he wanted to shift from 'being part of a low-cost outsourcing labour force in Ukraine, to being part of the well-paid cohort of IT professionals in Australia'. Interestingly, the experience of all 25 IT professionals was that they had always been linked to global orders, services and corporations. Panas said: 'I worked for different international IT companies in Ukraine and travelled to the US and London for some project work. I was always a part of global corporations', then adding 'However, it was always outsourced labour'. Anatolyi, Borys, Panas, Mykola, Simon, Kateryna, Svitlana, Zoya and Maksym mentioned that they had sufficient cultural capital to implement their achievement life strategies through migration to Australia – they had experience of working overseas and were exposed to a Western lifestyle and values. Panas said that he travelled abroad 'very often for work, to the US, Norway and the UK', while Marko said that he worked for three months in the United States and that his values had changed once he returned to Ukraine.

Indeed, these IT professionals were motivated by their externally acknowledged economic ability. For example, Panas described the 'experience of being "headhunted" by IT companies in Ukraine and internationally'. All these experiences built up their economic, cultural and social capital, which served as a platform from which to implement their achievement life strategies through migration. Maksym considered his professional mobility post-migration as an achievement of the transition from being an outsourced programmer in Ukraine to the IT manager of outsourced projects in Australia: 'In fact I moved from an outsourced programmer to the manager of outsourced projects. I have even done some offshore work with several programmers in Ukraine'.

The fourth factor that made participants go to Australia as skilled migrants was their desire to earn more money there. Panas said: 'I was very well paid in Ukraine, but I knew I could earn more in Australia for the same job'. Like Panas, Borys said the following about his financial situation in Ukraine: 'In L…, as a programmer, I earned $2 000 per month. That is the amount of money that my father earned in two years. In economic terms, IT programmers in Ukraine walk like gods; our status is high'. Participants said that they acquired sufficient economic capital through employment in the IT industry in Ukraine to turn their work (which was, typically, programming and product support) into well-paid employment as part of a cohort of professionals in a developed country such as Australia. Despite the cost of living in the host country being (significantly) higher than in Ukraine, their earnings in Australia leave them with more 'spending money'.

Lastly, our participants explained that they were interested in going to Australia because of the stable growth of the Australian IT market, which coincided with employment shortages in the country's IT industry, as well as easy conditions for their skilled immigration. The Australian IT industry matched the emergence of that in Ukraine and demonstrated stable growth over the eight years from 2000 (Australian Trade Commission 2008). Indeed, the IT sector is one of the most dynamic and progressive industries in Australia and contributes about $42 billion to the nation's economy every year (Smail 2013).

All 25 IT professionals were aware that Australia is a fast-growing and highly advanced digital economy. Fedir said: 'Before migrating I read and was impressed that Australia's ICT industry is one of the fastest-growing and most-innovative sectors of the Australian economy'. Borys said that the fact that 'onshore IT projects dominate over offshore imported services in Australia' encouraged his migration. This condition and a perfect supply/demand match, set Australia apart from other possible immigration destinations.

A good university education, a knowledge of English and the skills to work in a high-priority Australian profession allowed the IT professionals to successfully pass through the restrictive Australian points-based skilled migration system. Fedir, when asked 'Why Australia?', explained that it was the easiest country to migrate to:

> *Australia had the easiest immigration conditions when I was applying. I considered New Zealand and Canada but they didn't have my IT specialisation on the list. Australia did. If you are a programmer and your specialisation and experience are needed in Australia, you get a permanent visa automatically. Other countries didn't have this – you could go on a temporary working visa or you needed to have an employer. It creates difficulties. Many IT workers from Ukraine went to the US but Australia is better!*

Migration decision-making

Thematic analysis indicates that all 25 interviewees clearly realised that moving abroad was a massive project that required preparation, planning and management and 'involved the allocation of a long period of one's life to this project' (Borys). They generated their migration pathways and planned their achievement trajectories consciously by analysing their situation before leaving Ukraine and counting the potential 'dividends' from migration on the basis of information received from official channels, acquaintances, friends and relatives who had migration experience. For example, Marko said:

> *I remember I was very serious about migration from the start. I analysed the causes and the effects that I would hopefully get from moving to Australia. I talked to friends in Australia, and friends in the US and Canada. After calculating the potential return on investment, I made the decision to leave Ukraine for Australia.*

Marko uses the very rich expression 'return on investment' in relation to his migration decision. A similar mindset was revealed in the stories of Zoya, Andryi, Maksym, Vasyl, Panas, Daryna, Tamara, Anton, Oleh, Ivan and Mykola. Their stories show that they chose the most efficient way to implement their aims and values, reflected in their rational decision-making.

Firstly, they gathered information. The main information channels mentioned by Fedir, Borys, Tamara, Maksym, Bohdan, Zoryana, Anatolyi, Panas, Mykola, Marko and Andriy are: (1) official sources (Fedir and Borys mentioned the official Australian immigration website; Marko said he looked into unemployment statistics and did IT industry research; Panas and Anatolyi said that they used migration agents in Ukraine); (2) media resources and (3) friends and family (Mykola and Tamara relied on the advice of family and friends).

Secondly, after finding enough information to convince themselves that migration to Australia would be a professional, social and financial upgrade, they started to evaluate their chances of immigration. In order to go to Australia through the skilled migration stream, which is a points-based system, applicants need to amass a sufficient number of points to successfully launch their visa application. During the evaluation of their personal characteristics for suitability for the skilled migration programme to Australia, several participants (Mykola, Panas and Borys) said that they discovered they were lacking English-language skills and years of professional experience. Borys said: 'After the decision was made, it turned out that my main problem was the

English language. I began to learn it just before leaving'. Mykola, who trained as a radio engineer and worked as an IT support engineer in Ukraine, went to Australia in 2012 through the skilled migration stream, said: 'I had to re-sit the IELTS test eight times before I got the required score'. Another IT professional, Panas, went to London for three months to study English and to sit the IELTS in England.

Thirdly, participants said they used official and 'expensive' (Anatolyi) migration agents to help them to organise all the documents and guide them through their application process. Panas said: 'I used a migration agent just to feel secure and to be sure that I hadn't missed a thing. I could have done it all myself; I read a lot about it and knew the process. It was hard to get time off work at that stage'. The interview data analysed in this section suggest that the process of decision-making for IT migrants is rational, meaning that they include the reflexive monitoring of actions and environments.

Sense of agency

Another element that shapes the life strategy of achievement is agency. Participants expressed themselves as active agents of their lives, which drives their achievement life strategy. The manifestation of a strong sense of agency is an active life position (Zlobina and Tykhonovych 2005). Borys, Tamara, Fedir, Maksym, Anatolyi, Bohdan, Kateryna and Andriy described their active involvement in the social and political life of Ukraine. For example, Borys said: 'Together with friends, I was actively involved in many activities: I visited orphanages, tried to create cycle paths and parking. I think people make their own choices and make something good out of it'. Tamara said: 'I was involved in some social activities and shared my optimism and strength with people who were suffering hardship'. These cases demonstrate motivation and a high capacity and desire to produce change. Fourteen participants (Borys, Fedir, Andriy, Kateryna, Bohdan, Anatolyi, Daryna, Pavlo, Oleh, Petro, Daryna, Svitlana, Panas, Anton) indicated that they actively participated in the 2004 'Orange Revolution' protests in Kiev, meaning they were involved in the fight for the right and freedom to produce further social and political change in Ukraine. The revolution's lack of success prompted young Ukrainians to search for ways to control their lives and make a difference with the help of migration. Borys, who took part in the 'Orange Revolution' and went to Australia in 2010, explains his life position and decision to migrate:

> *I'm not one of those people who gets disappointed and stays silent, dissatisfied and stressed on the inside because I live in such a bad country and do nothing at the same time. Together with my friends we supported the 2004 protests. But, unfortunately, the 'Orange Revolution' did not succeed. In such conditions, I decided that the best thing to do was to change countries (migrate), rather than fight endlessly to change the country from inside.*

This way of thinking is evident in the narratives of the other five participants (Fedir, Andriy, Kateryna, Bohdan and Anatolyi). This cohort reveals a certain level of flexibility, the ability to feel as though they themselves are the subjects of the change and the ability to actively use every opportunity to improve their situation. Another example is Bohdan, whose behaviour, like that of the other migrants mentioned above, is characterised by consistent decision-making, leadership and a clear understanding of his prospects He said: 'I tend not to avoid problems but solve them. I realised that Ukraine was a dead-end for me in terms of development and self-realisation'. The narratives of 17 other migrants (Fedir, Slava, Daryna, Zoya, Tamara, Marko, Andrii, Vasyl, Anton, Svitlana, Oksana, Panas, Anatolyi, Mykola, Maksym, Simon and Bohdan) demonstrate the exercise of personal control over their circumstances and prove that, with the help of migration, they took responsibility for their own lives and guaranteed a certain degree of independence, liberation and freedom for themselves.

All the narratives of the interviewees reveal that they are actively involved in the social and political life of Ukraine. The majority of the participants mentioned they follow the news from Ukraine and actively participate

in the life of their friends and family back in Ukraine, as well as invest energy and financial resources to support civil initiatives and pro-democracy NGOs. Borys, Tamara, Fedir, Maksym, Anatolyi, Bohdan, Kateryna and Andriy mentioned their active involvement in democratisation efforts in Ukraine. For example, Bohdan said: 'I am still actively involved in many activities in Ukraine, as I want to see Ukraine become more liberal and democratic. I regularly financially support three big democratic movements and NGOs in Ukraine – Chesno, Razom and Ukrainer. I feel I can do much more for Ukraine when living abroad'. The majority of the participants demonstrated strong agency and the potential to impact on the situation in Ukraine from afar.

Values

Another building block of achievement life strategies is the set of liberal and non-materialistic values (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya 2001). These values include prospects and opportunities for self-realisation and a favourable environment for developing one's own initiative, freedom and independence. The stories of skilled IT migrants are dominated by expressions of liberal values. For example, Tamara said she values 'freedom and independence above all'. Like Tamara, 14 other participants (Borys, Fedir, Daryna, Zoya, Anton, Andriy, Vasyl, Anatolyi, Maksym, Mykola, Marko, Oksana, Slava and Panas) talked about freedom and independence in economic terms, referring to the career opportunities and financial independence that led them to choose to leave Ukraine. Marko noted: 'It is important for me to build my life and career only in a state of freedom'. Panas said: 'Freedom is crucial' while, according to Marko, people prefer 'the status of being a free spirit to the comforts of a stable life'.

Another value expressed by participants was the opportunity for self-realisation in combination with spiritual and professional development. Tamara said that the determining factor for her skilled emigration was that 'there were no opportunities for self-realisation, for further professional and spiritual growth for me in Ukraine'. At the different stages of her narrative, Tamara also expressed the value of the 'equality of life opportunities for people from different social groups'. She also mentioned the 'freedom of expression'.

Furthermore, the financial benefits of migration were not the primary pull factor for migrating to Australia; other reasons, explained above, provide a stronger motivation for the move. Thus, material values did not determine the life strategy of these migrants. Anatolyi said: 'In my life I most value life itself, not money! Even when I get my monthly pay, I am not excited. I see it as a means for living, not as a goal'.

Achievement life patterns after migration

Successful adaptation and social and economic integration define the achievement life patterns of Ukrainian IT migrants at the post-migration stage. According to Taran (2009), the indicators of successful integration are the possession of the professional, language and social skills necessary for an effective work and social life in the host society and the adequate protection of the immigrants' interests and rights there, including the right to preserve the essential elements of their ethnic identity. After immigration, all 25 interviewees sought integration in terms of professional and social success. They expressed in their narratives a strong desire to become 'locals' in the most efficient way. As Fedir said: 'I already feel Australian and I want to become local in the eyes of Australians as soon as possible, which I feel will move my career forward and let me have a complete social life here'. Later in the interview, Fedir clarified that, by being local, he meant being perceived as equal in the professional sphere, where he can communicate without barriers and show initiative that is supported by his Australian colleagues. Indeed, Mykola and Zoryana also used the word 'local' to describe what integration was, with Mykola saying: 'Being seen as local will definitely move my career forward'.

The IT cohort is ambitious and works hard to reach their desired advancement in social and economic status. Our interviewees were found to have done well after their migration in terms of labour-market outcomes. Following the logic suggested by Oleinikova (2020) – who used the match or mismatch of migrants' professions at home with their post-migration employment as an indirect indicator of status upgrade or downgrade – the IT migrants from Ukraine managed an exact match in their careers, both before and after migration. Moreover, they tended to get higher positions and/or promotions in their new jobs in Australia. As Marko said: 'My first job in Australia was at the same level as in Ukraine. After one year I was promoted from an IT data and insights analyst role, to the senior role of an offline marketing director, which would hardly have happened in Ukraine'.

In addition to using the narrative data, Mrozowicki's (2011) occupational careers descriptors – anchor and bricolage – are applied in order to understand the common thread running through the narratives of IT migrants who chose an exact (Panas, Fedir, Anatolyi) or an even better career match for their educational and professional backgrounds (Andriy, Vasyl, Anton, Svitlana, Oksana, Marko, Slava, Mykola, Petro, Kateryna, Daryna, Tamara, Simon, Fedir, Bohdan, Oleh, Zoya, Maksym, Borys, Tamara, Daryna and Pavlo). According to Mrozowicki, an anchor career is an 'intentionally shaped single-track pattern, based on lasting employment in a particular work organization in a particular field' (2011: 160). 'Anchoring' careers are those in which participants, while still in Ukraine, have already established and guaranteed their employment in the same company in Australia, as was achieved by Anatolyi, Fedir and Panas. In these cases, anchoring played a securising function and a guaranteed income in the same role as in Ukraine in the first days after arrival which, as Panas pointed out, 'sped up my successful integration'. 'Bricolage' careers, found to be the most common among our interviewees, involved a high level of responsiveness to the new environment and great adaptability, with their given resources and skills, to upgrade in their chosen occupation. According to Mrozowicki (2011), a bricolage career is a multi-track occupational choice that involves a high level of responsiveness to institutional and structural challenges in the new environment – which demands high flexibility and job mobility and excludes the emphasis on workplace continuity.

Another feature that defines the lives of IT migrants focused on achievement was the national self-identification of the participants as cosmopolitans or Australians. As Zoryana said: 'I value the freedom of self-identification. I feel I am a world citizen now'. The identification with Ukraine expressed by the interviewees seemed to be weak. Their national self-identification with Australia or even the world signals the success of their integration. Anatolyi said: 'I came to Australia to start a new life outside Ukraine. Why would I want to join the Ukrainian community? I want to be different and be Australian now'. Anatolyi's story suggests that his first priority was to build a new life and career (or advance his career) with no affiliation to the past. IT migrants are more involved in secondary groups. Borys said: 'I am a member of several tourist and professional societies in Sydney. I am more involved with Australian groups than with Ukrainians'. Building ties to the dominant group of Australians who are the best equipped to provide the participants with the information they need about predominant cultural codes, was also important to Panas, Anatolyi, Anton, Zoryana, Oksana, Andriy, Borys, Marko, Zoryana, Daryna, Mykola and Ruslana. As a result, IT migrants demonstrate a high level of English proficiency. Seven participants, including Fedir, who explained that he wants 'to sound completely native', mentioned their aim to get rid of their Ukrainian accent.

The narratives of the IT migrants also suggest that they are not indifferent to Australian political, social and economic life. Reciprocity and a strong sense of agency guides their lives. They remain active agents after migration, significantly impacting on institutional dynamics in Australian society. For example, Mykola said that he wants to bring innovation and progress to Australia by working on his new social business. Kateryna summarises this attitude, saying that: 'I see Australia as my new home … how can I stand aside? I want to contribute to its improvement and to make it a better place'.

As discussed in the theory section, when determining the process of the formation and consolidation of a life strategy in the structure/agency dichotomy, one of the fundamental categories is that of time (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya 2001; Naumova 1995; Reznik and Reznik 1996). The future plans of IT migrants are directed at both the present and the future. Their primary aspirations are articulated through: (1) plans to gain new skills and/or education in order to build a successful career in Australia, (2) plans to go overseas to gain professional experience in order to be promoted in their current occupation in Australia after they return and (3) plans to start their own businesses and build entrepreneurial careers.

Satisfaction with migration was expressed by all the interviewees – they considered their migration as a move that improved their life overall. For example, Oksana said: 'My life has improved since I moved to Australia'; Marko said: 'I have upgraded my career' and Tamara said: 'I am satisfied, I see where to grow in Australia'. Above all, this satisfaction is attributed by the IT migrants to their use of their individual resources, intellect, skills and education. As Marko said: 'Yes, there were people who supported me but everything that I have achieved in Australia is only because of my skills, enthusiasm, education and intellect'.

Conclusion

The cohort of skilled IT migrants from Ukraine to Australia clearly represents the 'achiever' types whose lives are shaped by intrinsic achievement-oriented life strategies. All 25 participants implemented their achievement life strategies through their migration to Australia and continued these strategies after migration. They catered for interesting work and professional growth and self-realisation, successful integration and the upgrading of their social and economic status and, overall, demonstrated a strong sense of agency focused on improving Australia, their home country – Ukraine – and the people around them.

The popularity of the achievement life strategies among the interviewees was found to be influenced by a combination of personal characteristics and individual actions (a set of liberal values, strong agency and the goal of a professional, social and economic upgrade) as well as of structural frames and conditions (relevant for the period between 2004 and 2013 in Ukraine and Australia). Structurally, the migration of IT professionals was formed by the growing IT market in Ukraine and shifts in Australia migration policy towards the greater acceptance of and favourable policies for IT professionals. At the individual level, skilled IT migrants demonstrate a strong self-awareness of their own power over their lives. Their choice of migration is well-informed and rational. Furthermore, the IT cohort interviewed were characterised by their engagement in the global industry and their transferable skills, along with the desire to escape from a job situation shaped in Ukraine by a glut of workers and a predominantly outsourced labour force, intertwined with feelings of technological abundance and low wages compared to the rest of the world. Through migration they became globally engaged in a technologically advanced environment – a space where they could have opportunities and develop, innovate and grow as employees or professionals.

Subsequently, the narratives of the 25 skilled IT migrants form a story or present themselves as a well-integrated members of Australian society – active agents of social and economic life who took advantage of the new opportunities that emerged. The reproduction of their life strategy of achievement after migration was informed by successful adaptation and social and professional integration, an Australian and/or cosmopolitan national identity, a high level of English proficiency, satisfaction with migration and future plans to succeed in terms of professional self-realisation, career growth and personal development.

Another issue that arises when analysing the cohort of skilled IT migrants from Ukraine is the 'brain drain' to developed economies. These migrants, who are classified as 'achievers' in terms of their values, motivations/aims and sense of agency, are part of the phenomenon of Ukrainian brain drain on the one hand and, on the other, of Australia's 'brain gain' (Beine, Docquier and Rapoport 2008; Docquier and Rapoport 2012;

Straubhaar 2000). Increasing economic globalisation, Ukrainian migration flows to Australia and the global interdependence of national, regional and local economies through the intensification of the cross-border movement of goods, services, technologies and capital, all created the completely different circumstances in which these IT migrants have found themselves in the last 15 years. This changing global order shaped the life strategies of Ukrainian migrants into achievement life strategies.

It should also be emphasised that the main limitation of these findings is the timeframe for data collection, which investigated the arrival of post-independence Ukrainian skilled IT migrants into Australia between 2004 and 2013. This specific period is the heart of the study as in these years there was a noticeable increase in the arrival of skilled migrants from Ukraine to Australia – seen to have produced migrants who implement achievement life strategies. Since 2014, the 'Euromaidan protests' and the military conflict in East Ukraine could have changed the dynamics of Ukrainian migration into Australia. Due to this, the changes to the life strategies of skilled IT migrants are expected and are assumed to be driven more by 'survival' than by 'achievement', although this is not the focus of the current study.

Notes

[1] Skilled migrants are people on the move who possess university degrees or extensive work experience in professional fields when they leave their countries of origin to seek employment elsewhere.

[2] Babenko (2004), a Ukrainian sociologist who studies social practices, life strategies and mechanisms of post-communist societal transformation, supports the ideas of Reznik and Reznik (1995) and Zlobina and Tykhonovych (2001). Babenko's division is based on the following criteria, which determine the strategy content: (1) the way in which social status is reproduced (advanced, simple and truncated) and, therefore, the decline or increase of life chances and opportunities, (2) the degree and quality of adaptation to changing conditions of social reality (successful), uncertain (unstable), failed (inability or refusal to adapt), and (3) the degree to which new opportunities are taken up in conditions of rapid change within post-Soviet transformation processes (Babenko 2004).

[3] The General Skilled Migrant (GSM) programme was designed to allow highly skilled people to migrate to Australia to live and to look for work or self-employment opportunities.

[4] As per the DIBP (2014) Settlement Database (SDB) data (extracted on 30/04/2014), the total number of Ukraine-born arrivals who were granted a permanent visa in Australia between 01 January 2004 and 01 January 2013 was 2 470 people, of whom 1 312 were skilled migrants, 1 005 were family, 6 were for humanitarian reasons and 147 for reasons unknown.

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No conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Habitus Mismatch and Suffering Experienced by Polish Migrants Working below their Qualification Level in Norway

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Recent research has reported that an increasing number of migrants in Norway are concentrated in the low-skilled sectors of the labour market, irrespective of their educational background, thus facilitating the formation of migrant niches in the long term. Despite the growing body of literature that raises the problem of downward professional mobility and deskilling among migrant populations, little scholarly attention has been paid to migrants' struggles and vulnerabilities as a result of underemployment. Drawing on 30 in-depth interviews, this article explores the common experience of habitus mismatch and suffering among Poles who have worked below their level of competence or professional experience since migrating to Norway. By analysing subjective experiences of downward professional and social mobility and the conflict between valued and stigmatised identities, the article examines the various habitus mismatches that contribute to suffering in downwardly mobile Polish migrants.

Keywords: habitus mismatch, suffering, stigmatised identity, downward professional mobility, class mobility

Introduction

The successful integration of immigrants into host labour markets not only contributes to host countries' sustainable economic development but also to newcomers' wellbeing. Among integrative mechanisms, labour market integration is considered one of the most important in the relationship between the individual (migrant) and society (Esses, Dietz and Bhardwaj 2006; Goul Andersen and Jensen 2002). In Norway, Polish migrants' high employment rates suggest their effective labour market integration, with 84 per cent aged between 16 and 74 being employed compared to 80 per cent of the overall population and 66 per cent of the migrant groups who are in the same age range and were covered by the same study (SSB 2017). However, when considering labour market integration, attention should be paid not only to whether migrants are employed but also to the

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types of job that they perform and whether these jobs are concomitant with their qualifications. Numerous studies have revealed that migrants are more exposed to work below their qualification level than non-migrants, both in Europe (including Norway) and worldwide (Beaverstock 2011; Cerna 2016; Duvander 2001; Nowicka 2014; OECD 2018; Salmonsson and Mella 2013; Syed 2008; Thompson 2000). Ethnically segmented labour markets contribute to the wasting of human capital, causing psychological distress among migrants that hinders integration efforts in other domains as well.

Although many insightful studies concerning downward professional mobility among migrants have been conducted in recent years (e.g. Beaverstock 2011; Cerna 2016; Duvander 2001; Man 2004; Nowicka 2014; Sert 2016), little attention has been paid to the struggles which migrants face when employed in jobs that are not only beneath their educational levels but also fall short of fulfilling their post-migration aspirations, thus negatively impacting on their wellbeing. UK studies on downward professional mobility and deskilling among Poles have attempted to explain the causes of the phenomenon (Nowicka 2014; Trevena 2013). Trevena (2013) ascertained that microlevel aspects, such as migration motives and intended length of stay, are crucial for understanding the reasons why highly educated Polish migrants take low-skilled jobs. She found that migrants had a stronger tendency to seek occupational advancement in the UK as their time living abroad increased. Nowicka (2014) attributed Polish migrants' acceptance of low-skilled jobs to their ambivalent attitudes towards the skills they gained through studies in Poland which they felt did not correspond to the UK labour market's requirements.

The scope of this article directs the discussion towards experiences that are related to downward professional mobility. Thus, unlike previous studies, it does not aim to explain the reasons that underlie the phenomenon itself but, rather, seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do Poles who work below their qualifications in Norway cope with their downward professional mobility?
2. What kinds of experience do they describe? and
3. How do underemployment and disappointed aspirations influence migrants' wellbeing?

Exploration of these research questions provides insights into the emotional and personal dimensions of international professional mobility and, in so doing, introduces the 'human face' to the scholarly discussion on 'labour migrants'.

Drawing on 30 in-depth interviews with Poles who have worked below their qualification level in Norway, this article explores the suffering that is caused by downward professional mobility. It analyses study participants' experiences of class mobility, the discrepancy between their sense of national identification and the stigma that is attached to this identity and the divergence between their educational and professional identities given the low-skilled work that they perform in Norway. Analysis of these aspects reveals how identities shape their everyday struggles with underemployment and how these identities and their social meanings influence migrants' wellbeing. The article develops the concept of habitus mismatch, which covers the study participants' experiences of multiple mismatches due to migration and underemployment. The article emerged from broader doctoral research in which the exploration of migrants' suffering was not an aim; however, analysis of participant narratives could not ignore the essence and commonality of this problem.

This article addresses two calls identified in the literature. The first indicates the need for sociology to acknowledge recent psychological works that have reported strict links between social mobility and increased vulnerability (Alcántara, Chen and Alegría 2014; Major, Dovidio and Link 2017; Simandan 2018) to diseases such as depression (Cruwys, Haslam, Dingle, Haslam and Jetten 2014) and to explore the link between the subjective experience of social mobility and wellbeing. The second call signals the need to comprehend the multidimensionality of the social processes that are involved in suffering. As some scholars suggest (Major, Dovidio, Link and Calabrese 2017), research tends to focus on single mechanisms beyond the experience of

suffering (health vulnerability, distress or loneliness) – such as migration (Djundeva and Ellwardt 2019; van Den Broek and Grundy 2017), class mobility (Alcántara *et al.* 2014; Simandan 2018) or identification with a stigmatised group (Cruwys *et al.* 2014). This tendency has contributed to the omission of complexity and the mutual entanglement of the social processes that negatively affect people's wellbeing.

In the following sections, I first contextualise the Polish diaspora in Norway, focusing on the patterns that characterise Poles' participation in the Norwegian labour market. I then introduce the theoretical concepts used in my analysis – namely habitus, habitus mismatch, affective emotions, social identity (with a focus on national and professional identities and stigma) and class. I then explain the study's methodology and, in the subsequent section, present the results. The final section discusses the research findings and draws the main conclusions.

Poles in the Norwegian labour market

Poles are the most numerous national immigrant group in Norway. At the beginning of 2019, the number of Poles residing in Norway was 112 000, representing 2.1 per cent of Norway's more than 5.3 million inhabitants (SSB 2018).

A series of studies conducted by Jon Horgen Friberg over the past decade have provided valuable insights into Poles' participation patterns in the Norwegian labour market. Polish migrants have been subjected to social dumping and, in certain sectors, have earned the lowest wages (Friberg 2010). Although the Norwegian government has introduced some policies aimed at protecting migrants from economic exploitation and wage decreases in certain industries (Friberg 2010), Polish migrants remain over-represented in low-skilled jobs, with the majority of Polish men working in construction and the majority of Polish women providing cleaning services (Friberg and Eldring 2011). Another study confirmed that Poles are overrepresented in manual jobs at 36 per cent and cleaning services at 15 per cent (compared to 9 and 2 per cent respectively of all the people who are employed in Norway) (SSB 2017). These numbers do not address gender differences in employment patterns, although participation in certain sectors of the labour market differs significantly between Polish males and females (Friberg and Eldring 2011; SSB 2017). Poles are also underrepresented in academia in which 8 per cent of Polish migrants are employed compared to 32 per cent of all the people who are employed in academic jobs in Norway. With regard to managerial jobs, 2 per cent of Poles hold such employment compared to 11 per cent of all the people who are employed in Norway (SSB 2017). Given that the Norwegian labour market is nationally segmented, distinct migrant niches have emerged (Friberg and Midtbøen 2017, 2019). Norwegian employers perceive workers' professional dispositions through the prism of their nationality and Poles do not particularly benefit from this approach since they are viewed as effective and hard-working manual labourers who are unsuitable for jobs that require representative tasks, customer service or decision-making. In employers' views, Eastern Europeans, including Poles (in contrast to Swedes), lack the predisposition and social skills that would enable them to perform well in such jobs (Friberg and Midtbøen 2017, 2019).

The proportion (47 per cent) of Polish women in Norway who have a higher education degree does not differ significantly from the whole female population in Norway (45 per cent). A higher proportion of Polish women in Norway have graduated from high school (45 per cent) than in the female Norwegian population (33 per cent) (SSB 2017). The proportion of highly educated men is lower than that of highly educated women, both for the overall population in Norway and for Polish migrants there. The percentage of men with higher educational credentials in Norway is 33 per cent compared to 20 per cent of male Polish migrants. The proportion of male Polish migrants who have completed high school (66 per cent) is higher than the proportion of males in the entire Norwegian population (43 per cent) who have done the same (SSB 2017). Thus, despite high professional activity among Poles in Norway, and educational levels that do not differ from those of Norwegian nationals, Poles are still concentrated in low-paid, low-skilled jobs.

Theoretical concepts

Habitus mismatch and suffering

To analyse study participants' experiences, I have employed Bourdieu's concept of habitus – a product of social conditioning that is reflected in individuals' dispositions (sets of perceptions, beliefs and behaviours). Through constant interaction with social fields, habitus generates practices and transforms; however, its abilities to change are limited (Bourdieu 1990, 1999, 2000). Moreover, habitus is not necessarily coherent and has only a limited degree of integration; thus, individuals can occupy contradictory positions with various statuses (Bourdieu 2000). When the field changes, habitus does not automatically transform to suit its conditions. Such circumstances foster the occurrence of what I call 'habitus mismatch', which aims to develop Bourdieu's notion of 'cleft habitus' that he referenced based on his own life experience of upward social mobility. While the concept of habitus has been central to Bourdieu's overall conceptualisation, the notion of 'cleft habitus' only occasionally appeared in his work in relation to his dual experience regarding the prolonged divergence between his internationally recognised academic accomplishments and his low social origins (Bourdieu 2007). Interestingly, habitus and its transformations have been analysed in numerous social studies without noting that habitus mismatch often shapes individual experiences and underlies habitus transformation. Therefore, this notion warrants further consideration, use and recognition in sociological analysis.

This analysis focuses on study participants' suffering. While emotion is simply a category, specific emotions are attached to the realities of actual experience. As Barbalet (1998: 2) pointed out, sociology does not need another general theory of emotion but would benefit from a deeper understanding of particular emotions, especially those that are central to social processes. Ahmed (2004) pays attention to the ways in which emotions work as mediators between the psychic and the social, between the individual and the collective and between past and present. Instead of viewing emotions as belonging to the subjects, she proposes focusing on the ways in which emotions involve subjects and objects but without residing within them. Like habitus, emotionality, feelings and emotional encounters can guide us through different levels of meaning, involving memories, expectations, experiences, aspirations and imagination (Ahmed 2004: 120; Svašek 2008: 218). I approach habitus and emotions as mutually influencing each other. For example, when a migrant enters a new field and recognises the meanings attached to his or her national identity, the sense of national identification (incorporated into the habitus) causes him or her to experience certain emotions (for instance, shame). This is because of the affective value of meanings that have circulated within the field over time (cf. Ahmed 2004: 120).

The suffering discussed in this article incorporates several emotions that negatively affect study participants' wellbeing. The manifestations of suffering that they reported the most often were stress, depression, grief, loss of self-esteem and self-confidence, feelings of isolation, weight loss and, in some cases, suicidal thoughts. It is beyond the scope of this article to diagnose participants' psychological conditions. Instead, suffering was approached as a lived experience and understood as an outcome of multiple habitus mismatches that resulted from downward professional mobility and migration.

Habitus mismatch analysis involved three specific mismatches: (1) social class mismatch, (2) the mismatch between national identification and the meaning and stigma attached to this identity in certain social contexts and (3) the divergence between habitus (and professional identity) as shaped by education (and professional careers) and low-skilled work. National and professional identity and a sense of class belonging are conceptualised as incorporated into an individual's habitus.

This article attends to subjective experiences of downward class mobility where class is understood as relational and symbolic, following Bourdieu's approach (Wacquant 2013). According to Bourdieu, in order to

distinguish between classes, one must analyse the properties embodied as class habitus, generating and unifying certain sets of practices and taking into account the symbolic dimension of group-making. Recognising the lifestyle that characterises a given class reveals hidden symbolic spaces (Bourdieu 1984, 1987). Bourdieu has avoided unambiguous definition of class; however, he proposed to define classes, *inter alia*, 'by the structures of relations between all the pertinent properties which give its specific value to each of them and to the effects they exert on practices' (Bourdieu 1984: 106).

Like subjective experiences of class, identities condition – and are conditioned by – habitus. Identities are social constructs produced in relation to others, whereas our sense of who we are depends on our (non-) belongingness to the groups or their imaginations (Jenkins 2008; Tajfel and Turner 1986). The collective process of identification occurs through interactions and is fundamentally based on constructions of similarity and difference (Jenkins 2008). Social actors construct their identities actively and the resulting constructions determine their sense of the positions they occupy in social space (Bourdieu 1987). As Jenkins (2008) noted, identities are attributes of embodied individuals; at the same time, they are collectively constituted, sometimes abstractly or symbolically. Identities are multiple and they are produced in discursive and interactive struggles over meaning. Depending on the situation, different identities may activate (Jenkins 2008; Simpson, Slutskaya, Lewis and Höpfl 2012).

Social identification positively affects the psychological condition and self-esteem by giving people a sense of belonging (Cruwys *et al.* 2014). A lack of positive social identification leads to feelings of disconnection or dislocation from the surrounding world; identification with stigmatised groups negatively impacts health (Cruwys *et al.* 2014). This analysis pays particular attention to national and professional identities, which are strongly activated when people migrate to another country in order to find a new job. Both professions and nationalities position individuals in social fields, albeit in different and contingent manners.

Professions differ in terms of prestige (Duemmler and Caprani 2017). They define individuals' positions in social space (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Domański 1991) and are important for identity construction (Duemmler and Caprani 2017). Professions not only dictate the activities which people perform at work but are also socially constructed and given meaning by those who perform them and by others – for instance, customers (Duemmler and Caprani 2017).

Like professions, nationalities determine individuals' positions in social space. The hierarchical positionality of nationalities shapes migrants' levels of (un)desirability according to their national origin (Guðjónsdóttir 2014; Guðjónsdóttir and Loftsdóttir 2017; Loftsdóttir 2017), impeding some national migrant groups in deriving positive effects from national identity. Stigmas marginalise individuals by reducing their identities to one-dimensional characteristics (Goffman 1968; Prasad, D'Abate and Prasad 2007), leading to group members' perceived homogeneity. Belonging to a stigmatised group renders it particularly difficult to derive a positive identity from membership (Jetten, Haslam, Cruwys and Branscombe 2017). Link and Phelan (2014), drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic power, argued that the power of stigma serves the interests of stigmatisers by aiding in their exploitation, control or exclusion of stigmatised persons. Approaching stigma as an expression of symbolic power facilitates an understanding of how power relations determine not only the social positions of different migrant and non-migrant national groups but also whose interests are served by the particular distributions of symbolic power expressed through stigma.

Many studies have shown that Polishness is one of the most stigmatised national identities in the European context (e.g. Guðjónsdóttir 2014; Guðjónsdóttir and Loftsdóttir 2017; van Riemsdijk 2010, 2013). Poles are associated with cheap manual labour (Dyrlid 2017; Friberg 2012; Friberg and Midtbøen 2017, 2019) originating from the outskirts of Europe (van Heuckelom 2013) and often experience racism, xenophobia and discrimination in everyday life (Rzepnikowska 2019). In this article, I draw a link between national stigma and the lived experience of downward professional mobility.

Method and data

The aim of my study was to explore the personal experiences of Poles who have worked below their level of qualification in Norway. Qualitative methods serve well for understanding social processes and social meanings. Interviews allow study participants to speak in their own voices and language (Byrne 2018; Morawska 2018). Among the different types of qualitative interviews, semi-structured ones are recognised as allowing researchers to explore aspects not originally perceived as part of the inquiry (Fedyuk and Zentai 2018) while remaining within a thematic frame outlined by the research problem. Accordingly, I prepared questions and topics (such as participants' educational and professional careers and their migration to Norway); however, I offered the interviewees a free space in which to share their experiences, thoughts and perceptions.

My analysis was based on 30 qualitative interviews with 18 females and 12 males of Polish origin, aged between 24 and 59, who have been working below their qualification level since migrating to Norway. I define 'qualification' as the highest level of education achieved, professional experience gained or professional certificates earned, enabling one to perform a certain job. The sample comprised Poles who, at the time of the interviews, had been living in Norway for at least one year. I recruited the interviewees by publishing an invitation to participate in the study on the pages of the relevant Facebook groups.

I conducted the interviews in the five months between September 2017 and February 2018. Of the 30 interviews, 19 were face-to-face – taking place in Oslo, Bergen and Bodø – and 11 were conducted online via video conversations with participants throughout Norway. The sample included nine participants in their 20s, 16 in their 30s, four in their 40s and one who was over 50. They have diverse educational and professional backgrounds, with five holding a vocational degree or professional certificate, nine a Bachelor's degree, 15 a Master's and one a PhD. Almost all (27) entered the labour market in Poland or in other countries before migrating to Norway, with 18 having performed jobs corresponding to their educational level and field of study (e.g. seven had worked in their profession for more than 10 years before migrating), three having worked in jobs that were parallel to their studies and six having performed jobs unequal to their educational backgrounds. The participants had been living in Norway for between one and 15 years, including 17 who lived there for more than five years, indicating a somewhat long-term settlement pattern within the sample.

The average length of each interview was 1 hour and 40 minutes, with durations varying from 50 minutes to 2 hours and 40 minutes. The full-length interviews were transcribed and analysed. Thematic coding enabled me to grasp the various manifestations of suffering that participants reported in relation to underemployment and to discern and analyse its links to other experiences. As all the interviews were conducted in Polish, the excerpts supporting my analysis here were carefully translated from Polish to English to ensure the preservation of their original meanings. Participants' names have been changed to ensure their anonymity.

The semi-structured interviews and my explorative approach to the problem under study resulted in rich and differentiated narratives, some of which were highly personal, emotional and biographical in nature. The sensitivities and emotions that might be raised in interviews should be tackled with care by the researcher (Ritchie 2003). Having this in mind, I remained empathetic to the participants' emotions and did not insist on discussing these or continuing lines of questioning that elicited them in my interlocutor. In such situations, I tried to react with empathy and to leave space free for the interviewee to determine whether he or she would continue on the topic. I was both surprised and interested in how willingly they spoke about difficult experiences and emotions. This convinced me of the significance of subjecting emotional experiences to analysis and strengthened my belief in the importance of the personal, yet highly social, experience of downward professional mobility.

Table 1. Characteristics of the sample (N=30)

Characteristics	Category	Number of participants
Gender	Female	18
	Male	12
Age	24–39	25
	40–59	5
Education	Vocational	5
	Bachelor	9
	Master	15
	Doctoral	1
Length of residence in Norway (years)	1–5	13
	≥ 5	17

Findings

Downward professional mobility and suffering

The interviews revealed the universality and gravity of the participants' suffering. Many became emotional while discussing their experiences of downward professional mobility and described their mental condition as poor. The most frequently reported issues were feelings of depression, loss of self-esteem and self-confidence, weight loss, distress, a sense of shame and humiliation and frustration. As the analysis proceeded, the link between post-migratory downward professional mobility and suffering proved to be more complex than it had initially appeared. The analysis uncovered everyday psychological burdens related to performing low-skilled jobs, heavy psychosocial and emotional losses and the longevity of the suffering experienced. Study participants addressed these issues in diverse ways; here, Daria (three years in Norway) described her daily struggles working as a cleaner:

> *I try not to think about the future, because when I do, I break down. I know that I won't stand working in the cleaning services for too long. Despite that, it's okay when it comes to wages. As far as my psychical condition is concerned, more and more often something besets me. Considerations. I won't stand cleaning for a long time; maybe I'll be able to do it for one more year.*

Although Daria, who has a Master's degree in political science, assumed that she would work as a cleaner in Norway, the realisation of this assumption resulted in unexpected burdens. The daily work has been increasingly psychologically taxing. She indicates that, although her earnings are satisfactory, they do not compensate for the personal psychological losses which have become increasingly distressing. Piotr shares the sense of loss in his six years in Norway:

> *I've reached such a stage now that my head is filled only with confusion. Because I've lost my self-confidence, I no longer know what I truly desire and what I'm able to achieve.*

Piotr has a Master's in tourism and spent several years' as an assistant and later a project manager, overseeing EU projects in Poland. In Norway, he worked as a cleaner in a hotel for five years. During this time, he learnt to speak Norwegian and was ambitious in seeking work related to his pre-migratory professional experience.

The lack of professional development was unbearable for Piotr and many other of participants. They invested significant effort in improving their job positions, usually without achieved the desired results and causing them to doubt their own abilities. Such an unfavourable situation can last for years, as was the case for Ela after her 13 years in Norway:

> *I know that if I hadn't made the decision to change my job at that point, I would have... Because during those 11 years* [in Norway preceding the job change]*, I received antidepressant treatment twice because there were moments when I howled at the moon, moments when I was driving a car and I imagined what would have happened to me if I had driven right in front of that truck. And there were all these frustrations.*

Ela's words reveal not only the intensity of suffering related to the performance of unsatisfactory work but also its longevity. Research has found (e.g. Trevena 2013) that Polish migrants often assume that their stay in a host country will be temporary and therefore perceive low-skilled jobs as only a short-term necessity. Some participants in this study also assumed that their low-skilled jobs would be temporary. However, these positions frequently lengthened into years and became an 'extending temporality'. At the same time, the participants demonstrated quite agentic attitudes towards improving their employment positions, for example by acquiring language skills and repeatedly applying for jobs they desired.

The following sections depict the processes, experiences and performativities entangled in the social dimension of suffering due to downward professional mobility and migration. The results draw on a cross-case analysis of all 30 participants. However, for the sake of transparency and depth, I have focused in this article on the three cases which I consider to be the most representative in terms of demonstrating different aspects of habitus mismatch. Specifically, the case of Dawid highlights the subjective experience of downward class mobility and stigmatisation, while Ewa's case is the most instructive for analysing the mismatch between national identification and the meaning attached to this identity. Dalia's case best represents the divergence between a professional identity shaped during education and the performance of work that does not correspond to this education. I also use quotations from other participants to support my main arguments.

Dawid: the subjective experience of downward class mobility and stigmatisation

Dawid, who is a male in his 20s, has a BA in construction engineering. He moved to Norway to seek employment soon after graduation so that he could save money to put towards a car or a flat in Poland. At the time of the interview, Dawid had been working as a wall painter for a Polish company for 1.5 years. Before migrating, he had never considered working in his profession in Norway. Working as a wall painter in Norway, he explained, enabled him to save more money than would have been possible if he had worked as a novice engineer in Poland. What has changed significantly since Dawid's migration is his attitude towards using his education to work in Norway. Although he was initially ready to work exclusively as a wall painter, he started learning Norwegian after spending some time there and, after a year, he decided to start applying for construction engineering positions. When discussing his work as a wall painter, Dawid guided his narrative towards his Polish, male co-workers. As is evident in the quotation below, he first referred to his pre-migratory acquaintances, subsequently contrasting them with his current colleagues.

> *It is a nice feeling to recognise the value of the people I knew before, during my studies. I was surrounding myself with – I was aware of it* [at that time]*, but now I appreciate it – really valuable, very intelligent people; it was possible to discuss anything with them. And now – construction workers, well, the boys' lives revolve around work. Work, what to eat, where to go fishing, what to drink, smoking, and work. And for*

me, it was, as I jumped into it from the outside, an overwhelming lifestyle. I was trying to organise my free time as well, to take a trip to the mountains or to sightsee in Oslo or something like that. They don't have this kind of attitude. They are, I don't know, so insular towards Norway, so hermetic.

In addition to contrasting his school acquaintances' characteristics with those of his co-workers in Norway, Dawid juxtaposed his own lifestyle and attitude towards free time with those of his co-workers. According to Bourdieu, possession of a set of common properties is embodied as class habitus and its ability to generate similar practices and lifestyles characterises individuals in a certain social class (Bourdieu 1984: 101). Dawid's experience of downward class mobility, as expressed in the above quotation, reflects what Bourdieu calls a 'double isolation'; that is, isolation from both the current class and the 'class of origin'. The latter is typically accompanied by nostalgia for the group that was left behind (Bourdieu 1996: 107). Although Dawid was surrounded by people, both at work and in his place of residence (he shared a flat with some of his co-workers), the sense of mismatch constantly made him feel lonely; he stated that, for him, 'The loneliness was the hardest difficulty'. In a study on undocumented Polish migrants in Brussels, Grzymała-Kazłowska (2005) found that migrant networks not only play a crucial role in getting a first job abroad but also serve as fundamental emotional support when someone is coping with a new life situation. Dawid's story shows that the feeling of difference between his and his colleagues' habitus caused him to perceive them as people incapable of providing him with emotional support, which increased the difficulty of coping with the challenges he was facing.

In his narrative, Dawid distinguishes between his and his co-workers' class habitus – his being characterised by an open attitude towards culture and his co-workers by a hermetic one. He highlights this distinction by defining his position in terms of 'jumping outside' into his co-workers' mode of life. This exemplifies a narrative strategy of othering himself from his co-nationals in order to construct his identity profitably – cf. Garapich (2012) who found that, although Polish migrants strongly identify with Polishness, the feeling of shame resulting from its attached stigma leads to a tendency to emphasise their difference from 'typical Poles'.

In the following quote regarding his relationship with his boss, with whom he has developed a close friendship, Dawid guided his narrative towards his professional identity.

I can talk to him about some things, like going fishing or... I don't know, I won't discuss the theory of relativity or evolution with him. You get it, right? That there is a gulf between us, like, ah... it's hard to talk about it. We are kind of different in terms of intellect. At a certain point, I also started to reflect on myself and came to the conclusion that, instead of broadening my horizons, fine, it's okay, I have a job, I earn money but I'm taking a step backwards in terms of intellectual development. Because I've been losing a grip on the strictly engineering industry, I've been forgetting those things that I learnt at university and I'm surrounded by people who are a little bit different to those with whom I used to spend time before I came here.

The feeling of isolation from his own class induced him to reflect on his professional development. Working below his qualification level began to seem problematic to him when it intersected with social degradation. Although he was initially eager to work as a wall painter, his subjective experience of downward social mobility and deskilling, which he called a 'step backwards in terms of intellectual development', resulted in such heavy psychosocial losses that he could not continue working in low-skilled employment. He commented 'My self-esteem has suffered a lot throughout this year'. This shows that satisfactory earnings do not compensate for losses in personal and professional development and that many migrants do not accept working in low-skilled positions as readily as previous studies indicated (e.g. Trevena 2013). At the time of his interview,

Dawid was motivated to secure employment as an engineer and was markedly hopeful that he would be successful in doing so. Thus, Dawid, like many other participants, did not accept a low-skilled position in the long term; he also displayed agency in attempting to change this unfavourable professional situation.

The study participants often showed awareness of their reduction to the one-dimensional identity of being a Pole which, in Norway, was understood to mean being a low-skilled employee. One female participant, Kinga, who has an MA in law and works as a waitress, said:

> *I rarely say anymore that I'm educated as a lawyer; I just say that I'm from Poland, and then everything becomes clear, like, 'Okay. From Poland? So let's work in a hotel', right? It's so strongly considered Polish work.*

Like Kinga, many participants indicated that low-skilled and low-prestige jobs in Norway are particularly ascribed to Poles, imbuing Polishness with a specific meaning. The difficulty faced by participants is that they do, in fact, work in low-skilled jobs that seem to match the stereotypical image; however, performing these jobs does not correspond with their aspirations or self-image. They instead identify with the professions for which they were educated and, in many cases, in which they have professional experience. These perceptions of Poles as low-skilled, manual workers impact on Poles' interpersonal encounters and relations. In his interview, Dawid referenced the experience of stigmatisation, as illustrated in the quotation below:

> *I share housing with a Spanish guy, and a Norwegian female moved in a week ago; she asked where we come from. He replied, 'From Spain'. 'Oh, from Spain! Football, beaches, parties!' Her reaction was so positive. 'And where are you from?' 'From Poland.' 'Well, you build here, you work hard, you get the job done so thoroughly, you're hardworking'. And you can feel a distance.*

Dawid emphasised the difference he sensed in his flatmate's reaction to his origins as opposed to those of his friend, pointing out the distance he felt when he revealed his Polish nationality. He added that there were several occasions on which he met women at parties who, upon learning that he was Polish, were no longer interested in him. It is understandable, then, that he has come to believe that revealing his nationality has explicit negative impacts on others' attitudes towards him. It also exemplifies how the circulation of meanings affects migrants' experiences, emotions and everyday encounters.

Ewa: national identification and the meanings attached to nationality

Ewa, a female in her 40s, has an MA in physiotherapy with a specialisation in neurology. During her career, she travelled worldwide to take professional courses in both physiotherapy and the management of healthcare services. She has over 20 years of professional experience, including in physiotherapy and health centre establishment and management. Ewa is a self-described 'accompanying' migrant. She explained this by stating 'I moved here [to Norway] to accompany my husband'. She obtained her first job and arranged accommodation through her network of Polish contacts. Employed through a Norwegian agency, she became a personal assistant to a disabled girl in a Polish family. Her responsibilities included housekeeping, such as cleaning and laundering. Together with her husband, Ewa moved into a basement apartment in a house that was owned by another Polish family who lived on the upper floors. Like Dawid, Ewa surrounded herself exclusively with co-nationals, both at work and at her place of residence. In this respect, Dawid's and Ewa's cases not only reflect the role that migrant networks play in steering migratory movements in specific directions but also demonstrate the extent to which sharing a common nationality may affect migrants' choices and actions when

seeking accommodation or employment – an interdependence that is widely recognised by migration studies (e.g. Grzymała-Kazłowska 2005). Although, at the time of the interview, Ewa had been living in Norway for 18 months, the first post-migratory year left a clear mark on her life, as described in the following quotation:

> *That year was one of the most difficult times in my life, I would say. Not only because of the work and the fact that I found myself in a totally different world, but also because of the conditions in the flat I was living in at first. (...) A lot of people were living there, different kinds of people, which is the other side of the coin.*

Ewa clearly identified the three intersecting aspects that played a role in the difficulties she experienced after migration – namely work, 'moving into a different world' and living conditions, especially flatmates. In sociological terms, her difficulties were attributable to the intersection of downward professional mobility, migration and the social environment she entered. Although a sense of commonality based on shared nationality initially guided her actions, over time she acutely felt the difference between herself and the people around her, both at home and at work, which she described as follows:

> *I witnessed pathological situations such that I had never experienced before over the 40 years of my life. And it was difficult; the most difficult thing was not to coarsen, to stay classy. Do you know what I used to do just after arriving in Poland? My son would pick me up from the airport, and I used to tell him, 'Daniel, just don't forget to bring my high heels'. It didn't matter that I was in a tracksuit; I was just putting on my high heels right away at the airport because to me, high heels are a symbol. Once, I had a teacher from Israel; she was a very wise woman, a doctor, and she always kept saying, 'Ewa, remember, the worse, the higher'. The worse the situation is, the higher the heels you should wear to feel better. (...) These high heels were so symbolic, it was like they were saying, 'Hey, you! Listen, jump out of these gumboots, leave this straw behind, and come back to life!'.*

Embodied habitus is an integral part of behaviour and manifest in it (Jenkins 2002: 75). According to Bourdieu (1990: 69), both a body and a language are stores of thoughts that are able to release themselves, independent of time and space, by 're-placing the body in an overall posture which recalls the associated thoughts and feelings, in one of the inductive states of the body which, as actors know, give rise to states of mind'. By wearing high heels, Ewa repositioned her body in a posture that recalled the status, social position and identity that had been suppressed due to life events. The affective emotions which she felt became socially communicated, playing an active role in the intersection of the social with the embodied dimension. This embodiment of habitus mismatch also demonstrates how Ewa constructed her social spaces. Like many other participants, she positioned herself differently in the social space of Poland compared to that in Norway. In their social fields in Poland, many participants felt a sense of 'being somebody', with many differentiated social identities and relationships whereas, after migrating, they became 'just a Pole' or simply 'nobody'. For instance, one participant stated 'I came to a foreign country, and I really became nobody here. And I clean the flats and clean the offices and my profession was not about me cleaning up somewhere, right?'.

For Ewa, the content and meaning of Polish identity became uncomfortable. She related the symbolic dimension of the high heels she wore at the airport to this topic. As evidenced by the following excerpt, she referenced the stereotypical picture of a Pole in Norway:

> *Thus, these high heels are the other side of these Poles. I mean 'these'... I'm a Pole, too but, these Poles in Norway, a large percentage of Poles, who, I don't want to name it, but we know what it is. On the whole,*

they give this nasty picture of a Pole abroad – not only in Norway – and I lived in it, and I saw it. I was close to it.

Interestingly, given her experiences, Ewa potentially justifies the stereotypical picture of Poles in Norway. Wearing high heels after arriving in Poland was an embodiment of Ewa's need to construct her identity as different from that of Poles. The move to Norway, where Polishness carries specific connotations, contributed to the experience of mismatch between national identity and its meanings. As a result, participants like Ewa tended to construct narratives that differentiated themselves from other Poles, again indicating a strategy of othering from stigmatised Polishness. Both the content of social identities and the meanings of groups as understood by their members powerfully impact on psychological conditions (Cruwys *et al.* 2014). In the following quote, Ewa speaks about her suffering as a result of multiple habitus mismatches:

During that time, it felt as if the real 'me' was standing somewhere next to my body. I wasn't present there myself at that moment. I had to cut myself off from my own identity. I had to. (…) Between October and January, I lost 25 kilos; now I've put on weight again, but I had lost 25 kilos. Due to the stress. (…) I think that in the time following that – January, February, March – I think that it was depression, severe depression. I was just coming back to this apartment and covering myself with a duvet and sleeping in order not to see it, not to hear, not to see or hear anything at all. I didn't eat; sometimes I didn't even feel like taking a bath. I was moving myself into a state of non-existence.

The habitus mismatches that Ewa experienced led to suffering so severe that it prevented her from functioning normally in her everyday life. Vianello (2014) found that highly educated Ukrainian women working as domestic help and caregivers in Italian households struggled the most when their employers (the family members living in the households) were poorly educated. The higher the employer's educational levels were, the better self-evaluation these women expressed. Ewa was a caregiver to a disabled girl in a Polish family whom she described as pathological and primitive. The girl's parents had lower educational levels than Ewa, yet Ewa was their subordinate. This relation strengthened Ewa's experience of habitus mismatch. Downward social mobility is a situation where individuals are particularly vulnerable to experiences that entail a range of negative health outcomes (Alcántara *et al.* 2014).

Dalia: educational background, work, and identity

Dalia moved to Norway after completing a five-year programme in psychology and gaining her first six months of professional experience as a personal consultant in a large company. While studying in Poland, she accepted seasonal work during the holidays picking strawberries in Norway. Through the Erasmus programme, she also spent a semester at a Norwegian university. She quickly 'became fascinated by Norway' and dedicated much of her interview to describing the positive experiences she had at the Norwegian university, partly to justify her decision to move there after graduation. Her plan was to secure a job with a human resources company before learning Norwegian, with the ultimate goal of working as a psychotherapist. However, after migrating, Dalia quickly realised that securing her desired job in recruitment with her knowledge of English but not of Norwegian would not be as easy as she had expected. At the time of the interview, Dalia had been living in Norway for three years. Given that she needed to earn money to finance her stay, she decided to start working as a domestic cleaner. She commented on the subject as follows:

D: I was working as… I don't want to use the word 'cleaner', but I was cleaning those houses, those two houses.

A: Why don't you want to use that word?

D: Because it doesn't suit me. I don't see myself in this profession, so…

A: You don't identify with it?

D: No, I don't identify with it at all. I understand that there's nothing bad about… If it's fine by someone and it's adequate for someone's ambitions, then okay, but for me?

During the interview, Dalia avoided calling herself 'a cleaner' by using alternative phrases such as 'working in cleaning'. Acknowledging that professions have statuses that indicate people's positions in social space, it becomes clear that the status and social meanings associated with working as a cleaner were unacceptable to Dalia's self-identity. Later in the interview, Dalia described how the experience of working below her qualifications influenced her self-esteem:

I would say that my self-esteem lowered drastically. I had such low self-esteem that… I had never had such low self-esteem before… It's like, you know… It's hard when you used to go to school, you were always a top student at primary school and secondary school, you used to have the best grades and diplomas with honours, and then you studied and you also graduated with the best grades and so on, and suddenly you work as a cleaner or a waitress. It was like hitting a wall.

Dalia identified the educational results that have shaped her self-perception – namely being a top student, achieving the best grades and earning diplomas with honours. These educational outcomes have structured her habitus and identity. By juxtaposing these habitus attributes with the reality of working as a cleaner or waitress, Dalia's narrative offers a vivid picture of the experience of habitus mismatch. Setting aside their educational backgrounds to accept low-skilled work was difficult for most participants, one of whom said, 'Lowering my qualifications, it was a painful blow, a very painful blow'. Dalia's words similarly communicate the everyday psychological burden of performing a job for which she is overqualified:

I remember, I was scrubbing a bathroom [at the client's home]*, and I started to cry. I was scrubbing this bathroom and thought 'Geez, Dalia, what are you even doing? You are here and instead of sitting, I don't know, going back to Poland, where, in Warsaw or Krakow, you would find a job at once in human resources because your friends found jobs in human resources after graduation, so why are you even here at all? (…) What are you doing here? Are you really scrubbing someone's bathroom!?'*

Interestingly in this excerpt, Dalia introduces an inner dialogue between the part of her that is cleaning a bathroom in someone's private home in Norway and the part that is a psychology graduate with superior career prospects in Poland. As Bourdieu noted, habitus destabilisation leads to a double perception of the self (Bourdieu 1999). Dalia's case highlights the potentiality of habitus mismatch to trigger a moment of consciousness with regards to one's own habitus. Furthermore, the quotation implies that the Polish labour market is still a reference point for Dalia and she is not convinced that her decision to migrate was the right one.

Falling unemployment rates and rising wages in Poland may contribute to migrants becoming increasingly sceptical of performing low-skilled jobs in other countries.

Conclusion

This article has investigated cases of habitus mismatch that underlies the difficulty and suffering associated with experiencing post-migratory downward professional mobility. Outlining the multiple habitus mismatches that migrants face has enabled an exploration of how downward professional mobility influences migrants' wellbeing and increases their vulnerability. For example, identification with stigmatised Polishness proved to play a significant role in shaping Polish migrants' experiences of everyday struggles related to their underemployment. They struggle not only with performing the low-skilled work *per se* (resulting, among other things, in a feeling of a 'step backwards' in self-development) but also with the one-dimensional meanings attached to being Polish in the Norwegian labour market. These meanings, which influence migrants' positionality, affect their emotions and undermine their self-perceptions. From the study participants' perspective, the stigma they experience during everyday encounters places them at a disadvantageous position and categorises them exclusively as low-skilled workers. Moreover, they experience a mismatch between their professional identities and the status that is concomitant with the low-skilled jobs they perform. Class mobility leads to the experience of 'double isolation' – that is, despite being surrounded by co-nationals with whom they work and live, participants felt different and isolated. At the same time, they reported a sense of longing and nostalgia for the 'class of origin' that they left behind in Poland.

The experience of multiple mismatches leads to migrants' suffering. The most common manifestations of poor mental health, as self-reported by study participants, were feelings of depression, a loss of self-esteem and self-confidence, weight loss, distress and frustration. These negative outcomes should be of particular concern since migration is increasing, migrants are more susceptible to underemployment than non-migrants and, as research has shown, some national identities are particularly exposed to racialisation and stigmatisation (e.g. Loftsdóttir 2017; Midtbøen 2019; Przybyszewska 2021; Rzepnikowska 2019).

This article contributes to the literature on international professional human mobility and perceived discrimination by introducing the emotional and human dimensions of these experiences. Migration research abounds in utilitarian terms such as 'target earners' or 'labour migrants'. However, these terms tend to deprive migrating individuals of their 'human face'. This article has proposed that researchers employ greater sensitivity in the study of human mobility.

The article also offers a conceptual contribution. Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of cleft habitus, I have proposed extending the concept to habitus mismatch in order to cover the habitus destabilisation that results from the multiple mismatches that have been discussed. As this article has shown, the notion of habitus mismatch facilitates the analysis of migrants' lived experiences of downward professional mobility and its associated suffering.

Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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'By Education I'm Catholic'. The Gender, Religion and Nationality Nexus in the Migration Experience of Polish Men to the UK

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To date, the literature on gender and migration continues a longstanding bias towards female over male experiences. Similarly, research on Polish post-EU accession emigration has not sufficiently addressed the male experiences of migration. Drawing on 20 interviews with migrant men, this paper contributes to the existing research on the variety of masculinity practices and gendered migration from the Central and Eastern Europe. In so doing, it focuses on the relationship between masculinity, religion and migration in the context of migration from Poland to the UK. While religion is also rarely addressed in discussions on the post-EU accession migration of Poles, it proves to be important in shaping world views and influencing migrants' positionalities in the new social context. Indeed, in migrants' narratives, gender, religion and the nation intertwine with one another. Analysis shows how certain aspects of men's social identities that were originally assets turn into burdens and how the men reach to religion, while distance from the institutional Church, to renegotiate their new positionality in order to avoid denigration or to support social recognition – which is especially important in the social reality shaped by Brexit.

Keywords: gender; intersectionality; masculinity; nation; Polish migration; religion

Introduction

While Poles are frequently referred to as unanimously Catholic, there is an important and ongoing change in their religious practice and belonging to the Roman Catholic Church (c.f. Ramet 2017). Adam (aged 35), whose quote is in the title, says about his relation with religion and church:

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By education I am Catholic. It wasn't my choice, I was baptised, I took my first Communion and I had a church wedding, no special reason for that. But when it comes to my relationship with Catholicism I avoid it like the plague, I despise hypocrisy.

This caught my attention, as it relates to the generational experience of attending religious lessons, which were introduced as a voluntary school subject at Polish schools in the early 1990s. Thus, Adam meant that he was, quite literally, educated in Catholicism. On a more abstract level, what Adam said refers broadly to his relationship with religion and religious institutions. He, like many others, has been socialised to conform to religious requirements and to attend to certain rituals – e.g. christenings, communion, weddings, etc. At the time of the interview Adam, however, distances himself from the institutional church, both in Poland and in the UK where he now lives.

With this in mind, it is interesting to see what unveiled in our conversation – the socio-cultural context of his upbringing and the strong influence of Catholic teachings on, for example, gender relations plays a significant role in how he interprets and narrates his migratory experience. Adam and my other interviewees, both believers and non-believers, all referred to Roman Catholicism to different extents and in various contexts and, in so doing, as I came to realise, re-negotiated their new position in an attempt to avoid denigration or to support social recognition of migration to the UK.

Arguably, Polish migration to the UK in the post-2004 European Union enlargement has brought about a revival of Catholic parishes in the UK but, as claimed by Gallagher and Trzebiatowska (2017), only very limited scholarly attention has been given to the religious life of these migrants. Similarly, the nexus of gender, religion and the nation has not been a central topic of interest in studies on Polish post-accession emigration. However, given the role of the Roman-Catholic Church on shaping gender ideals in Poland (Leszczyńska and Zielińska 2017), it opens new possibilities for interpretation of the processes by which migrants adapt to and negotiate their new positioning in the British social context.

Poles constitute the second most-religious migrant group in the UK and Ireland (Gallagher and Trzebiatowska 2017: 433). As argued by Joshi (2016: 125), Christianity – and thus Catholicity, being the dominant religion in many of the EU member-states – enjoys cultural and social (at times also political) hegemony in those Western countries receiving migrants. Joshi also draws attention to the normative power of whiteness within Christianity in the West, with race becoming a proxy for religion (2016: 128). This intersection of religion and whiteness becomes important for my interviewees in constructing deservingness and belonging in the British context, against non-whites and non-Christians. Referring to religion, for both believers and non-believers, is a way of negotiating belonging and social recognition, which is especially important in the reality of the post-Brexit vote.

In what follows, I discuss when and how religion offers meanings which are added to the lived experiences of migration for Polish migrant men. I focus on a number of aspects of the Polish-Catholic identity as markers of belonging and tools for negotiating inequalities and marginalisation. In order to better understand the entanglements of masculinity, nation and religion and their interplay in the migratory context, I refer to intersectionality and its application in migration and masculinity studies (Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays and Tomlinson 2013; Christensen and Jensen 2014; Crenshaw 1989; Lutz 2014). I also discuss the role of religion in Polish society, as it has an impact on the positionality of men, both in the country of origin and, arguably, in the new post-migration socio-cultural context. I also apply the transnational perspective on migration, as it shows that migrants maintain ties and attachment to the country and society of origin, yet simultaneously form new attachments to the place of emigration. As such, migrants' sense of belonging evolves, while the country of origin remains a reference point with regard to their new social positioning or gender relations in the country of destination, for example.

Polish men in the UK – transnational gendered subjects

A while ago, migration researchers, in response to criticism about their gender blindness (Morokvasic 1984, 2014), began turning their attention to gender issues in migration as playing a pivotal role in peoples' lives. However, the subsequent development of migration research centred on female migration and for a long time, men's experiences of migration were underexplored (Charsley and Wray 2015). Similarly, critical studies on men and masculinity in Poland do not have a long history and the field is in need of further studies (Kluczyńska and Wojnicka 2015). To date, in the migration scholarship in Poland, male migrants have been placed predominantly within the economic discourse of a male migrant breadwinner (c.f. Bell and Pustułka 2017), although some research has also addressed male obligations within transnational families and negotiations of gender relations (Kilkey, Plomien and Perrons 2014; Pustułka, Struzik and Ślusarczyk 2015).

Masculinities are understood as configurations of practices realised in social actions which differ in their historical, geographical, cultural and social contexts (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Wojnicka and Ciaputa 2011). As such, differences in the perception of gender and gender relations in Poland and the UK represent an important dimension of the Polish (male) migrant experience of life in the UK. However, to explain the dynamics of social positioning in the migratory context, other categories should be included in the analysis. Intersectionality has been applied not only in women's studies but also across several other disciplines within the humanities and social sciences (cf. Carbado *et al*. 2013; Lutz 2014; Lutz, Vivar and Supik 2011). The most important aspect of intersectional analysis was its acknowledgement of differences between women (for the origins and the development of the concept see, *inter alia*, Crenshaw 1989; Davis 2008; Lutz 2014; McCall 2005; Walby, Armstrong and Strid 2012). Analogously, intersectionality can acknowledge the differences between men and can add to our understanding of their positionalities in migration processes (Christensen and Jensen 2014; Sinatti 2014). This includes changes to these positionalities resulting from the intersection of race/ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, nationality and a number of other categories (cf. Davis 2014: 23).

Gender and gender hierarchies are continuously produced and reproduced (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001) through interactions with other socially constructed categories such as race/ethnicity, class, sexuality and body (Christensen and Jensen 2014). Depending on the context, these intersections can support, challenge or even subvert the dominant position and male privilege of some men. The intersectional approach can be of help in determining whether and 'how being a man can be a category of disempowerment and lack of privilege rather than a privileged position' (Jensen 2010: 70). In this study, the Polish migrants' belonging and other masculinities were identified as important areas of social change and negotiation for male positionality following migration. In this context, intersectionality also serves as a heuristic device allowing detection of the overlapping visible and invisible strands of inequality (Davis 2008; Lutz 2014, 2015).

Applying the concept of transnationality to migration studies, Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1992) discussed the fluid relationship between the two spaces – communities of origin and those of destination. Anthias (2002: 500) emphasises that 'the migrant is dynamically placed in three locales and their intersection: the society of migration, the homeland and the migrant group'. The host society and the migrant group are the fields of my empirical enquiry, while the homeland is an important point of reference for migrants. In this transnational social space (Faist 2004), gender ideologies travel across borders and are manifested – and sometimes contested – in social relations. Migrants navigate between various societal expectations arising from (at least) two social spaces (Donato, Gabaccia, Holdaway, Manalansan IV and Pessar 2006). This means that functioning in different, often conflicting social hierarchies may cause tensions, as migrants continuously turn to and evaluate their experience with the community of origin or the members of such.

Gender, nation and religion in Poland

Catholicism and its role in Polish society has been the subject of many studies. In the Polish religious landscape's recent history, the 1989 socio-political and economic transformation marked an important moment for the Roman Catholic Church, as it went from being, to certain extent, politically suppressed under the communist regime, to being capable of influencing public and political life (Ramet 2006). That said, the Church's intervention caused a backlash which coincided with the differentiation of society due to the transformation process. The privatisation of religion, referred to by Davie (2002, cited in Mandes and Rogaczewska 2013: 259,) as 'believing without belonging', has been described as one of the results of such a backlash. However, it has also been argued that 'belonging without believing' has become a feature of Polish Catholicism (Mandes and Rogaczewska 2013: 260).

The social role of religion has been acknowledged already in the work of pioneering sociologists and anthropologists. To date, religion's relation with nationalism is a much-discussed phenomenon, with modernisationist claims that nationalism has replaced religion (c.f. Brubaker 2012: 22). Brubaker reviews approaches to religion and nationalism, considering them as analogous processes (as a mode of identification, social organisation, and a way of framing political claims) and religion as an explanation for nationalism (c.f. Zubrzycki 2014) and as being part of nationalism; finally he considers nationalism to be manifested in a religious way or, in other words, religious nationalism as a distinct form of nationalism.

These ways, neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, help to conceptualise the relationship between nationalism and religion. The latter contributed to the origin and development of the former – e.g. through the political appropriation of religious symbols and through narratives as appropriated by and adapted to the specific Polish historical and geo-political context. The alliance with the Catholic Church substituted for the non-existing Polish state in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which helped to maintain a sense of national identity under a foreign rule (Davies 2005). As in religious nationalism, which joins state, territory and culture primarily by focusing on family, gender and sexuality, two processes took place: the ethnicisation (or 'indigenisation', cf. Zubrzycki 2014: 63) of religion and the deification (sacralisation) of the ethnos (Zenderowski 2011, 2017), both of which affected femininity and masculinity ideals.

In the Polish context, the ideal of femininity is loaded with national and religious meanings (Dąbrowska 2011) inspired by the cult of the Virgin Mary, a central aspect of Catholicism in Poland. Sacrifice and caring abilities remained central to womanhood within Polish Catholicism (Kałwa 2003), while conservative religious views on gender and family became essential to nationalistic ideologies. Religious vocabulary, such as the 'Polish Golgotha', strengthened this sacred dimension of the nation (Zenderowski 2011: 52). As such, it also served to uphold the vision of the traditional Polish family with its gendered division of labour by reinforcing traditional femininities (care, motherhood and sacrifice) and masculinities (associated with strength, authority and power) as a hegemonic cultural model. Interestingly, the role of men and masculinity in general was not given a great deal of attention in the discourse on gender within the Catholic Church in Poland. As Adamiak and Sobkowiak argue (2011), there was a certain assumption that male roles need not be questioned, as if they were obvious through the hegemony of masculinity within the religious teachings of Roman Catholic Church. This also points to the conclusion that the Church regulates and controls the life of its subordinates (Szwed and Zielińska 2017: 121). On the other hand, however, following the post-socialist transformation with its growing insecurities in socio-economic life and the dismantlement of the welfare state, the discursive strategies employed by clergymen in recent decades have focused on preserving the patriarchal order and resisting changes related to new fatherhood ideals and gender mainstreaming in public life (Arcimowicz 2016).

The Polish Roman Catholic Church successfully intervened politically several times in the spheres related to gender relations and family life – e.g. on the introduction of religious education in public schools whilst

effectively keeping sex education off the curriculum – and the limitation of access to abortion in 1993 (which had been free since 1956). These interventions coincided with a wave of negation of state-socialism heritage in public life. The Church built on traditional views of what is considered as normal (especially in gender terms). The role of men was thus consistently built around fatherhood ideals (in reference to God) and work, where the wise, responsible father enjoys a certain authority within the household. The re-traditionalisation of gender relations in the post-1989 reality (Szwed and Zielińska 2017; Watson 1993), with its vision of the 'traditional Polish family', was a promise of normalcy in a society affected by the pace of social and political changes. As, ultimately, the nation is the 'family of families' (Szwed and Zielińska 2017: 124), such a promise extended to the state level.

Although the Church in Poland openly supported the fast-approaching EU accession, many also warned against secularisation and Europeanisation, fearing that these would undermine the 'Polish Christian identity' and values (Szumigalska 2015). While, on the one hand, there existed a desire to protect these values (including 'traditional Polish families' and national sovereignty) against the outside world, there was also a sense of mission, of a 'great apostolic assignment' (Casanova 2006: 67). First, it exploited the image of Poland as part of the Christian family of nations returning to its righteous place in Europe. Second, it was Poland's duty to remind Europe about its Christian roots and to re-evangelise the EU (Philpott and Shah 2006: 53). How much of a live issue this still is today was illustrated in the words of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki in an interview with TV Trwam[1] in December 2017, in which he expressed his vision of a re-Christianisation of Europe by Poland. When an alleged EU 'anti-family policy' was 'discovered' in the convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, this led the Polish Church to declare war on 'gender ideology', a war which went into full swing when the then-liberal government began work on introducing the convention in 2012 (Arcimowicz 2016). Presenting itself as the voice of the (Catholic) nation, the defender of Polishness and a symbol of stability and normalcy, the Church called for the protection of Polish society against the influences of the EU and its regulations.

Methodology

This paper draws on findings from the fieldwork which I conducted in Brighton and Hove and the area of East Sussex in Great Britain during the summer of 2016. I chose this location for two reasons – first because the place was known to me, as I had studied and worked there for nearly three years and, second, because this allowed me to get to know many Polish migrants in this very diverse, liberal, LGBTQ-friendly and multicultural location, which was a novelty for many Polish migrants, including myself. Therefore it was a perfect setting in which I could observe how people react when confronted with different perspectives related to, for example, gender practices. The move to a much different social and cultural context reveals how people adapt to, resist and/or question the gender relations of both a host country and a country of origin. Given the limited period of fieldwork (a total of seven weeks) and the nature of the research, which required a certain knowledge of the research site as well as building a rapport with my participants, this choice of location was only sensible.

I reached my participants, using the snowballing technique, through an informal network of people. I also posted a note on a social media website for Polish residents in Brighton and Hove, resulting in numerous responses and a pool of interviewees that expanded beyond my initial network. My interviewees were aged 25 and older (to mid-40s), had spent at least their early adulthood in Poland and had been living in the UK for a minimum of one year, with the majority having moved there in the first few years following the EU Eastern enlargement in 2004. Some were married to Polish women and two were in inter-ethnic relationships. Prior to that, during a first field visit, I also collected additional data, which included interviews with five Poles who

worked in East Sussex – social workers, interpreters and volunteers – supporting Polish migrants in their contacts with institutions in the UK – schools, hospitals, kindergartens, social services, the police, etc. They informed me about the life of Poles in the area and the most common problems encountered.

Within the group of research participants – white Polish men living in Brighton and Hove – I aimed for diversity in terms of age, education, class, job, family status and migration experience. Although I only interviewed men, this strategy helped me to ensure the collection of diverse biographical narratives, which makes it possible to control the accuracy of the findings (Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland 2009).

I used a biographical approach which is concerned with people's stories and experiences of everyday life and conducted 20 narrative interviews with Polish men living in the research area (Chase 2009; Kaźmierska 2013). The interviews were accompanied by elements of participant observation, as I lived with other Poles and took part in their social activities. I wanted my interviewees to reflect on their own upbringing and the cultural and social specificities of their social background and to relate these to their new surroundings. The interviews were conversational, which allowed them to freely construct their life stories and granted a better insight into their worlds and the subjective perspectives and experiences that form their social reality (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Throughout the interview (and later in the analysis) I noted where, how and why gender, ethnicity, class and religion were reflected in the narratives of the interviewees and asked follow-up questions in order to get more in-depth information on the issues which were particularly interesting to me. The intersections reveal which categories are useful to migrants or, conversely, which become a burden. This works differently for individuals, who are disadvantaged along some axes and simultaneously advantaged along others; therefore they actively negotiate and develop strategies of resistance (Lutz 2014).

As a result, the interviews were long (ranging from two to five hours) and rich in data. I transcribed and analysed the interviews and field notes by means of open coding in order to generate initial categories (complemented by memos) and then main concepts, which were created by cross-case analysis of the transcripts (I used MAXQDA software for the analysis). Altogether, the initial field visits, participant observation, field diary and the interviews, as well as their simultaneous transcription, allowed for the triangulation of methods and the data gathered, which is considered to be not only a validation strategy but also a better way of gaining a deeper understanding of the issues being researched (Bailey 2008; Byrne 2001; Denzin 1973; Flick 2010). For the purpose of this publication I also translated selected quotations.

The researcher's positionality in cross-gender research

Researchers who share the ethnicity and nationality of the group under study usually hold 'insider' status in that group. Multiple times I was told by the interviewees that they felt obliged to help a fellow Pole, which indicates that ethnicity can be used as a resource. However, against the naturalising notion of nation/state/society and methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002), migration researchers suggest going beyond ethnicity (Amelina and Faist 2012; Glick Schiller and Caglar 2009). It is understood that migrants cannot all be contained as 'insiders' under the homogenising ethnic or national label. Instead, such factors as gender, age, family or professional status show how identities are re-constructed in the migration process, leading to shifting positionalities of researchers and migrants in the research setting (Ryan 2015).

As a woman seeking to interview men about their experience of migration and posting about it on social media – and apart from those men who were interested in helping me with my project – I also received unwanted attention in the form of explicitly sexualised comments suggesting that I was disguising myself as a researcher but was, in fact, interested in sexual encounters. I find this important to note for two reasons. The first is that female researchers rarely receive instructions on how to deal with sexual advances and harassment when conducting field research. The second is that I had to manage and at times emphasise the boundary

between myself and my interviewees, which made me even more aware of the gender differences and variations in our situatedness (Davis 2014). Interviews, like other social interactions, are gendered; thus gender affects the fieldwork and research process and one has to be aware and sensitive to how this is manifested in the research setting (for a detailed analysis of this issue see, for example, Kilkey, Perrons, Plomien, Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ramirez 2013).

The interviews often took place in pubs or cafés; for safety reasons I deliberately opted for meetings in public spaces – especially with those interviewees whom I knew very little about – as many of them took place in the evenings, after work or in remote areas near to the place where they lived. I made sure that interviewees knew upfront that our meeting would not incur any costs on their part. In two instances we met in the public park and on Hove Lawns. As the meetings were quite long, we then moved to a nearby pub or café but only after I had reassured them that it was only reasonable that I cover the costs, since it was I who insisted on meeting. Financial matters were important here (as these interviewees had insecure jobs) but they also intersect with gender issues and how these are manifested and played out at meetings. Importantly it was not only them but also other interviewees who remarked that it was unusual to have their beverages paid for by a woman; in these instances, I managed to negotiate the issue and to move it onto a professional footing, insisting that it was a modest reward for their assistance. The fact that the meetings were quite long meant that some of them were able to offer me a beverage in return, which sometimes led to joking reference to the norms to which they were accustomed in Poland.

I attempted to build a rapport with my interviewees by stressing my experience of migration, working in service industries and living in Brighton; these topics usually served as good conversation openers. However, there were several occasions on which interviewees apologised for their language, when a swear word slipped into the conversation. I managed to discuss personal issues in considerable depths and also received a lot of data on, for example, other women, gays or hetero- and homosexuality in general (often seen through a traditional gender perspective). This, I assumed, could be attributed to the fact that their views were not questioned or argued against, as they may perhaps be in other situations. Instead I asked additional questions, so that they would not feel challenged (which perhaps then strengthened their opinions about the supposedly conciliatory nature of women). However, as in other interview situations, one has to be aware of the social desirability bias. All these factors made me reflect on the data I receive as a female researcher, how gender influences the research situation and possibly also the nature of the findings and their interpretation.

The gender, nationality, age and migrant status (and other categories which the limited space in this paper does not allow me to account for) play out differently in the research setting. Interviews often challenged, for example, the traditional view of the insider–outsider binary. Depending on the situation, I needed to emphasise my agency as a researcher over the importance of the shared experience of being a migrant myself (or some other category of analysis such as class or family status, etc.) or, *vice versa*, while also negotiating my gendered positionality in fieldwork relations. Therefore, in line with the intersectional approach of this study, 'the "I" as well as the research "object" must be understood as situated not only in one-dimensional categorisations in terms of gender, or race, or class or nationality or sexuality or dis/ability or age or other social categorisations, but in a multiplicity of intersecting power relations' (Lykke 2014: 3).

Hierarchies within – challenged or strengthened? The role of religiously mobilised nationalism

In the past, migration from Polish territories was a widespread phenomenon. Over time, this phenomenon gained certain cultural meanings and ideology. This ideology was based on the dichotomy between political refugees – the 'right sort' of migrant – and the economic migrants who were seen as egoistic and less patriotic (Garapich 2007). How migration was perceived in moral terms is evident in the writings of Catholic hierarchs

in Poland during the 1980s, with explicit reference to the Christian moral code of love, rights and responsibility to one's nation, based on which people ought to rethink their emigration decisions (Erdmans 1992).

An interesting challenge to this discourse comes from some of the post-accession migrants I had a chance to talk to. Maciej (aged 45) left Poland in 2006 and wanted to be involved with the Polish diaspora (*Polonia*), primarily consisting of political refugees following the end of WWII. He and a few friends began to participate in the life of a Polish parish in Brighton and then moved on to organising regular events outside the church – mostly related to national celebrations, many of which commemorate the heroes of WWII, Polish combatants or historic events such as National Independence Day.

Maciej views emigration from Poland as a loss for the nation; however, he refuses to feel guilty for leaving the country. He elaborates on the sense of betrayal of the nation by the political elites in the transformation process, blaming them for the ill effects of privatisation through selling off most of the state-owned companies and industries:

> *This so-called transformation just washed out everything, they* [the elites] *sold off everything that there was to sell, the workers were forced to go abroad, those who were the best have gone, and the worst have stayed, so how can it be better there?*

In short, Maciej blames the elites for the mass emigration, not the workers who were pushed to go, as he perceives it, as having almost no agency of their own. It resembles Blank's (2004: 357) description of a place as powerless in confrontation with external forces – first through the transformation which deprived the country of its former status and, second, through mass emigration, which emptied the place of its people: '[place] was eaten not by one particular other place, but rather by Elsewhere itself'. Maciej sees the country's bad leadership as a betrayal of the nation and economic migration as a reaction to this betrayal, not a betrayal in itself. This may also be viewed as a way of negotiating the hierarchy within the larger Polish community, comprising both *Polonia* and economic migrants, among whom the post-2004 arrivals were the most numerous. Maciej explains that being abroad does not release him from fulfilling his duties to the 'fatherland'; he works to preserve the memory of the Poles who fought in WWII under British command:

> *Here the needs are greater… to do this kind of work, than in Poland, we are doing something good here, good for Poles, we cannot shut our Polishness away and by doing this we are showing our dignity to the British. (…) As long as they are here* [the Polonia] *this is my mission and I don't care about my wealth, I have this mission to preserve Polishness here and the memory of them* [the combatants].

This generational guard change, taking up the *mission* of preserving Polishness and the memory of WWII combatants, is a way of negotiating belonging within the larger Polish community and reaching out to the symbolic capital that was previously only available to the 'righteous' political migrants. In this manner, he does not challenge the hierarchy between Polish migrants (political and economic); on the contrary, he condemns those who focus only on their own wellbeing or the fulfilment of their personal goals:

> *Here the climate is a bit different, simply, not everybody wants to be Polish here (…) Polishness and religion are almost inseparable, I don't go to the church for the priest, I go there to be with the community, it has to come together, not only having a Christmas Tree and that's it. If we are to remain Catholic we must remain within the community.*

His orientation towards his country of origin intertwines with his religious motivation for belonging to the nation, with Catholicism being a category of national self-identification. His interest in history focuses around battles for independence and the unappreciated, in his view, contribution of Poles to the defeat of Nazi Germany. His mission is to preserve from oblivion the memory of these men and their deeds. This memory is constructed around bravery, heroism and sacrifice on the altar of the fatherland, all of which constructs a very masculine vision of history. Interestingly, this vision of national history is based on recapturing the past greatness of the nation, which is also apparent in other narratives.

Negotiating belonging

The experience of migration shows how different categories (such as masculinity, ethnicity, geo-political location) place men variously within the matrix of social relations in the UK. Gawlewicz (2014) discusses how migrants reproduce the binary between them and the British in relation to the geo-political position, where East is considered backward in comparison to the more civilised and cultured West. This is actively contested, however. As Maciej says:

> *One heard so much about this West, how great it is, how beautiful. (…) I wanted to see if it is really like that. They talked about respect and that you work eight hours a day and that workers are treated well. (…) but this dreamed of West was... it didn't work like that, food was bad, and expensive, money is not as promised, we all saw it, we thought 'Oh, England', a higher civilisation [ironic] so it was a clash, a very diverse society, we have seen all these districts of London, which were not very good-looking.*

Interestingly enough, this quote does not tell us as much about Maciej's actual experience of England as about his imagination of the West, in which is reflected the hidden trauma of Polish transformation. Maciej longs for the decent treatment of the workers who lost much of the protection available to them under the socialist regime. For many, the 'promised world of capitalism' (Burawoy and Verdery 1999: 4) brought insecurity and diminished welfare support. The imagined West included the promise of a better life abroad. However, the 'peculiar ambivalence of privilege' (Wojnicka and Pustułka 2017: 92) in intra-EU migration became clearly visible in the years following the 2004 EU expansion. The shift in the way in which Polish migrants were regarded – from skilful intra-EU migrants with an excellent work ethos, epitomised in the figure of 'the Polish plumber' (Noyes 2019), to undeserving Eastern Europeans 'stealing our jobs' and farming state benefits – showed how labour market positioning intersected with non-Western origin (Lafleur and Mescoli 2018) and caused a parallel shift in the positionality of migrants. This was a disappointment for many; workers felt that their hard work went unrewarded, giving rise to sentiments of disillusionment and exclusion, as expressed in Maciej's words: 'for them [British] you will never be equal, they will tell you that you are Polish'. This sense of deprivation became even more acute during the Brexit referendum campaign; people felt that their contribution to the British economy was not appreciated, as Maciej again states:

> *Brexit! And suddenly they looked down on us, telling us to leave and that they will be happy without the Poles. Yeah, sure, I would be happy if Poles returned and left them to stay alone with all these… let them fill this void after us, and what would they do then? They would fill it with people from faraway continents, with refugees, who will then control this country, like now in London, with the Muslim mayor.*

The sense of deprivation due to feeling like a second-class citizen intertwines with a certain bitterness towards the British. In his words, the positioning is clear – the Polish workers are much more worthy, yet unappreciated,

than the less-worthy workers from *faraway*. The consequence of welcoming *them*, as he sees it, referring to the Mayor of London, is the creeping Islamisation of the country.

In their understanding of British society, the interviewees like Maciej placed a value on whiteness, which places them higher up on the social ladder in the UK, whilst even established ethnic minorities are perceived by them as 'Others', as being of a lower social status, as not belonging. Simultaneously, the sense of marginalisation of Polish migrants within British society intertwines with their criticism of European affairs and they see themselves as no longer deluded by what Europe claims to offer:

> *After all it is good that we are not amazed by Europe anymore. Look at what is happening, we* [in Poland] *would have all the same that is happening now in France or Germany, I mean the immigrants from Africa and so on, the terrorism* (Krzysztof, aged 32).

Such views among my interviewees coincide with the opinions expressed on internet fora, showing that the creation of the discourse about the West, migration and multiculturalism is transnationally constructed within migrants' social networks and on social media, where it can be easily expressed, embraced and reinforced (Fiałkowska 2018). Maciej's and Krzysztof's rants against immigrants, Islam and refugees led them to the conclusion that the freedom and hedonism which Poles observe in the UK weaken the nation but Poles are too strong to be deluded by this, according to Maciej:

> *For Poles it is a shock, to see it for the first time, this freedom, this liberalism, one gets used to it, it is very cool at the beginning, but later on Poles return to their roots, we are like that, we want to protect our values, and we are Christians, just like the British are, we share a common and difficult past.*

In their view, the national and religious values that Polish migrants bring with them strengthen the Christian and European dimensions of British society. Similar thoughts are expressed by Filip (aged 25), who migrated to the UK to join his mother, a circular irregular migrant prior to EU accession. Filip's adolescence was spent partially in the UK, partially in Poland; he ultimately chose to settle in the UK:

> *I am most angry at their democracy. People are free here but it is only for some time, they let all of them come here, you know what I mean* [immigrants]*, I don't accept everything that is going on here, I tolerate it but don't accept it. Some would say 'So why don't you go back to Poland?' There is that feeling that you are not in your country, but I feel European, I am in Europe, so why should I feel threatened, or fight for my place? I am not afraid, I know my rights, I pay taxes here, I work.*

These interviewees talked about their perception of a Europe in decay, which they attribute to mass migration and changes in the socio-cultural landscape of European societies. As such, this perceived decay is linked to the liberal democratic system which gives more freedom to (European) citizens, but also allows 'Others' (whether citizens or not) to claim belonging. For my interviewees, their shared European origin serves as a resource for self-identification and a marker of belonging, regardless of the West–East binary. This feeling was also shared by those interviewees who were critical of the nationalistic attitudes expressed by others in my sample:

It is quite clear that Europe, there is this common denominator, the roots of our continent are mainly Catholic, I mean I don't consider myself a Catholic, but generally, you know what, these centuries of Christian tradition have shaped people, our mentality, the values we have are the same to the British – family is important (Janek, aged 35).

Janek's words resonate with the opening quote – *centuries of Christian tradition shaped people*, like Adam being *educated in Catholicism*. Neither of them are churchgoers nor strong believers; however they refer to the same community of values, which is a manifestation of 'secular and Christian cultural identities' (Casanova 2006: 66).

Janek has lived in the UK for 10 years and, during the interview, he often mentioned the way the English make him feel inferior, especially in inter-male relationships. He negotiated this position by proving himself at work and by using his sense of humour to deal with the cruel and vicious types of joke told in his very masculinist work environment (cf. Datta 2009). He also perceives Europeanness and religion as common denominators serving as a basis for understanding with the British, helping to minimise and negotiate the inequalities: 'religion is total bullshit, the only worth is in these Christian values, they are better than those of other religions (…)'. The alleged similar mentality of the British and the Polish, deriving from their shared Christian tradition, is something that allows the interviewees to negotiate the asymmetrical hierarchies between the British and themselves. To achieve belonging, migrants also employ strategies which they probably did not use in Poland and refer to categories of manhood (strong work ethic, reliability, moral values, patriotism), whiteness and religion.

Clash of masculinities

Intersections of gender and other categories in the migratory context can potentially subvert male privilege – cf. reactions to the inter-ethnic relations of Polish women in Siara (2009) or the perceived (un)attractiveness of Polish men abroad in Wojnicka and Młodawska (2011). This was also a recurring topic in my research when respondents realised that their Eastern European masculinity was not perceived as attractive:

Poles are often related to as Easterners, more primitive, like Russians or Lithuanians, so women look at us as if we represent a lower standard. Italian, Spanish, oh this is something different [ironically] (Janek, aged 35)

Whilst on some level, Polish migrants were intersectionally rewarded through assumed cultural proximity to the British (cf. Bell and Pustułka 2017), their Eastern Europeanness, as Janek explains, influences not only labour-market positioning (the shift from desired, yet cheap workers, to undesired/undeserving Eastern Europeans) but also their positionality in social relations. Similarly, while they are aware of their male privilege within the EU labour market (reliable, hardworking and non-threatening EU migrants) they are also aware of the intersectional power structures which place them lower on the social ladder: 'as a Pole I certainly have it easier, than, let's say, a Somali. But it is more difficult for me than, for example, a Swede' (Mateusz, aged 29).

The construction of masculinity which gave Polish men a privileged position in their country of origin may become a burden in the UK, with some Polish men experiencing being seen as barbaric or primitive, especially in relation to other masculinities, as described by Janek. This ties in with the unease which men feel about Polish women entering into inter-ethnic relationships; furthermore, they view British women as sexually promiscuous and therefore unsuitable as potential life partners. Adam, whom I quote in the opening of this paper, mentioned his date with a woman who was soon to be married, which made him rethink his dating strategy in

the UK: 'I only date Polish women. In my opinion, English women are degenerates'. This perspective was challenged by another interviewee, who interprets it as the inability of Polish men to overcome their conservative gender-relation ideals:

If any of my Polish friends entered into an inter-ethnic relationship, it was always a woman, I don't think I know of any men who wouldn't be in a relationship with a Polish girl [Author: why do you think that is?] *Women are more open-minded, Polish men are more backward, closed, and these foreign women are even more open-minded and I have a feeling that some Poles wouldn't like it, these women are too emancipated, it won't be a woman who will stay at home and serve her master, so they don't like it, they are looking for Polish women* (Wiktor, aged 32).

Tension arising from the fact that Polish women are sexually available to non-Polish men on the one hand and the migrants' gender-relation ideals on the other have already been observed by researchers (cf. Siara 2009) as well as by the migrants themselves, as becomes clear from the above quote. Janek (aged 35) explained how he views the inter-ethnic relationships of Polish women:

Women, you know, they are more fragile, and the first thing they do is to search for someone, for a partner to take her hands and lead her, (…), and I would say that these are mostly men from Asian or Arab countries, who are taking advantage of their position, you know what I mean? These women happen to be in a completely different culture, which could be the reason why they are so fragile as women, but then they should have searched for a European partner.

He elaborates on the notion of women who need protection and men's support. This construction of femininity relates to a context in which men should protect women and families against the unpredictable outside world (cf. Kociołowicz-Wiśniewska 2017). In his view, women who find themselves outside of the socio-cultural context which they are familiar with are easily deceived. The lesser evil is when the woman finds a *European partner*; Krzysztof (aged 32) attaches a great deal of importance to this:

There is a cultural shock, cultural differences. I am not saying that women cannot enter into inter-ethnic relationships, but that they do so for no good reason. Races are mixing; it is not only Polish women but most are from Eastern Europe. Some say that, in the future, only five per cent of the population will remain white and this will be a problem. The cultural clashes are bad and the children suffer as a result. In most cases this happens when a Polish woman marries a Muslim; this is a heavy topic – children have to follow the husband's religion and then the problems start.

As in other nationalisms, women are seen as the bearers of cultures and reproducers of national boundaries (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 2005; Yuval-Davis 1997), and this becomes ever more important when abroad. The clash also relates to the image of Muslim men, constructed as violent, primitive, uncultured and impulsive, also in sexual terms and therefore dangerous to women. This is contrasted with Christian masculinity, which is civilised, rational, moral and disciplined, especially when it comes to sexual relations (Nagel 1998: 245). As noted elsewhere, Christianity and whiteness have become normative and, through vocabularies of difference (civilised vs uncivilised/villainous), influence the racialised perception of men of other religions, especially Muslims (Joshi 2016: 130–131).

The way that Polish migrants emphasise whiteness, Europeanness and Christianity, and racialise other masculinities, shows how they manœuvre to situate themselves more favourably in the British racialised status

hierarchies and make themselves similar to white British society (cf. Fox and Mogilnicka 2017). It enables them to show belonging to the same community of values and resist their migration-related lower status. The clash of masculine ethnicised Catholicism and masculine racialised Islam, brought about by encounters within multicultural society and in the shadow of the so-called refugee crisis, shows how Polish migrants navigate these hierarchies to achieve belonging. This is also evident in some of my interviewees' narratives, when they used racialised vocabularies of difference to justify the lack of acceptance of refugees and Muslim immigrants in Poland:

> *We can't let this happen to Poland, to see these hooded Muslims* [referring to the headscarf] *walking around, you know what I mean. Poland has to remain Polish, I don't say that nobody else is allowed but they should respect the country that is not theirs, they should work for this country, do everything to make that country better, and not to take their values from some primitive lands to their new country, only to destroy it and enslave it* (Filip, aged 25).

The insider–outsider relationship is invoked once more with the presumption that *we* are actually talking about the same thing – 'you know what I mean' does not only refer to *us* being Polish and observing *this* happening to Europe (immigration and multiculturalism seen as destroying the continent) but also to *us* sharing the same opinion, as if we both know and agree upon how dire the situation is. The interviewees did not refer to how this affected them personally but to how it may affect their country of origin, in a broader sense – the imagined community. The categorical attributes here are used to construct sameness and otherness, to further delineate who is and who is not entitled to certain positions and resources (Yuval-Davis 2006: 199). Needless to say, the discourse about 'protecting' Poland, Europe and the European Christian identity is strongly gendered, masculinised and heteronormative and refers to power (Kociołowicz-Wiśniewska 2017).

Over-sexed men – Muslim refugees – are one threat to the nation but the 'under-sexed wimp', associated with homosexuality, is another as it transgresses gendered geographies and challenges heteronormativity. The heteronormativity, too, is strongly linked to the ideal of manhood and supported by nationalism and religion:

> *For me a woman is a woman and a man is a man. This is what the family should be like, this is how one should raise children. (…) What about the Christian values? I don't talk about religion as such but values, who will pass the values to future generations if not normal families?* (Fillip, aged 25).

Piotr (aged 39), a former student at a clerical seminar and still a very faithful Catholic, elaborates on his position towards homosexuality, saying that it comes from his personal convictions and religious teachings about what is right and wrong:

> *Poland is a majority Catholic country, and Catholicism doesn't allow such things. Let's not pretend, this isn't normal, never was and never will be, they* [persons of a homosexual orientation] *will try to convince us that it is, I know them, I know what they are, but the nuclear family is the core of society, men and women. That is how we are made, it is a perfect match, and two men, perhaps platonically they can love each other, but they will never make a family.*

Both interviewees refer to the normality of gender relations (often referred to as natural law – see below) and its construction within the Catholic tradition, where the duties of men and women are clearly defined. Sławek (aged 33) says: 'If I had known what Brighton was like I would have never come here, I was shocked'. He

softens his stance on this matter; however, he still sees it as a deviation of some sort: 'This is against nature, against natural law'.

These views are contested by some of my interviewees, whose criticisms link such views to Catholic teachings and local specificities:

I took my First Communion, I was even confirmed because, long ago, I thought I would get a Church wedding, more due to tradition. My grandma was a churchgoer and a believer, but now I absolutely don't identify with Catholicism. Christianity says that everyone is equal in the eyes of God, but this does not apply to refugees, or to gays. Polish Catholicism is very parochial when it comes to this (Wojtek, aged 32).

The equality of all human beings as the basis of religion has previously been addressed by Sojourney Truth in her speech 'Ain't I a Woman?' (hooks 2014); in intersectional feminist studies, religion has been also mentioned as one of the social divisions in international human-rights discourse and practice (cf. Yuval-Davis 2006). Here, too, Wojtek refers to the God-given equality of mankind and notes that Polish ethnicised Catholicism draws boundaries along ethnic/national, gender, religious and sexual lines. Some refer to Catholicism to claim that homosexuality is unacceptable and abnormal, against nature or natural law and that the nuclear family is the core of society (cf. Arcimowicz 2016; Collins 1998). Similarly, those who distance themselves from the Church see such attitudes as informed by Catholic teachings. In their arguments for equality they refer to religion as well, emphasising different aspects of Christianity than do those who strive against homosexuality.

Conclusions

The focus on religion, intersecting with gender, nation and class, has shown how it serves as a resource for self-identification and self-worth, to support social recognition and to draw boundaries in the migratory context for both those migrant men who identify with the Catholic Church and those who distance themselves from it. In their narratives my interviewees, to different extents, referred to these categories, describing in their own words how intersectionally rewarded or marginalised they are, understanding the relationality and processuality of their social positioning within the wider British society (from deserving cheap workers to socially unattractive and economically unwelcome Eastern Europeans) but also reflecting on the hierarchies of Polish migrants in the UK.

Gender and ethnicity are invariably linked to structures of domination and power relations. Negotiating their position, some of my interviewees naturalised the construction of gender differences, linking gender, nation (and ethnicity) and the concept of belonging to the (European) nation and the hierarchies and obligations derived therefrom (cf. Collins 1998). Identifying as Polish, Catholic and belonging to the 'Christian family of nations' is the way that my interviewees worked to achieve belonging and stressed the rightfulness of their presence in the UK. Whilst race/ethnicity/nation became proxies for religion, references to 'Others', especially racialised Muslims, emphasise the difference, highlighting the *us* versus *them*. The *us* have the right to belong and the *them* do not – they are uncultured and are becoming more bold and more demanding, while they should remain silent and humble given their lower status (Joshi 2016: 135). These forms of identification also help to elevate the social status of Polish migrants, allowing them to distance themselves from non-European migrants or to reduce the social distance between them and the British, as discussed in other work (cf. Fox and Mogilnicka 2017). What is more, attitudes towards Polishness and Catholicism (differently defined and at times conflated) highlight the differences between Polish migrants, as the narratives of my interviewees made clear.

Coming from a predominantly white and ethnically and religiously homogenous country – where stigmatised 'Others' either do not exist (like the Jews) or are marginalised (like the Roma) – Polish migrants encounter multi-ethnic society for the first time. The men not only negotiate the status hierarchies, building on the

whiteness and heritage of 'Christian civilisation' but also create a superiority discourse towards the UK, in which the whiteness of their country of origin is valued more than economic prosperity and viewed as something that should be protected.

I have shown how religion and religiously motivated narratives are used to overcome and resist the lower status which Polish migrants hold in the social hierarchy of the UK. As mentioned throughout the paper, the Catholic Church and religion (in the sense of belonging but not believing) is presented by some as the backbone of Polishness. Under the influence of Brexit and the current nationalist revival, which sees mass immigration from outside Europe as a threat to Christian civilisation, the alliance of nationalism and religion may be strengthened. These issues should be also analysed with reference to the extreme-right-wing movements and organisations that are gaining popularity among some Polish migrant groups in the UK (and elsewhere) and in the country of origin; more research in this direction is needed.

Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Note

[1] A Catholic TV station (lit. 'I persist') run by the Lux Veritatis Foundation and headed by Redemptorist Father Tadeusz Rydzyk. For more on the radio and its position in the wider Polish Catholic Church and state relations, see Pędziwiatr (2015).

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Kazakh Homecomings: Between Politics, Culture and Identity

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This article is devoted to contemporary return migrations by Kazakhs – a process of great significance for the population and cultural policies of the government of independent Kazakhstan. I examine the repatriation process of the Kazakh population from the point of view of the cultural transformations of Kazakh society itself, unveiling the intended and unintended effects of these return migrations. The case of the Kazakh returns is a historically unique phenomenon, yet it provides data permitting the formulation of broader generalisations. It illustrates the dual impact of culturally different environments, which leads to a simultaneous preserving and changing of the culture of the new immigrants. The analyses found in this article are based upon data collected during two periods of fieldwork conducted in June–July 2016 and March 2018 at several locations in Kazakhstan and in cooperation with a Kazakh university. The research methodology is anchored in multi-sited, multi-year fieldwork.

Keywords: Kazakhstan; homecoming; repatriation; return migration; adaptation

Introduction

Serving as inspiration to delve into Kazakhian return migrations were previous fieldwork experiences in Kazachstan and seemingly inconsequential moments in the researcher–researched relationship (Nowicka 2007). Not knowing the Kazakh language, I turn to an elderly inhabitant of Raiymbek, a village some 40 kilometres from Almaty and speak in Russian (an official language in the country). He smiles awkwardly and says something in Kazakh. Entering the conversation is a Kazakh ethnographer who explains that this particular settlement is inhabited primarily by Kazakhs who have come from Mongolia. In like manner the situation repeats itself in other localities to the south as well as in south-eastern Kazakhstan where some individuals are barely able to express themselves in Russian because a part of the family had come from China or other countries.

It was in these homes that, during *Nauryz* (Kazakh New Year) in March of 2018, I met with exceptionally archaic, familial celebrations of the holiday. Traditional Kazakhs living in present-day Kazakhstan but who came from Mongolia and did not understand Russian. This situation was a consequence of the great returns

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– great because, among today's general population in Kazakhstan, at least 10 per cent are immigrants, returnees and repatriates from various (mainly bordering) Asian countries.

This article is devoted to this specific category of Kazakh citizens as well as to the role they play in the government policies of the sovereign state of Kazakhstan. Additionally, I focus on the problems of the returning migrants' adaptation under the conditions of a planned process of re-Kazakhisation in the nation-state. Not to be overlooked are also the secondary, unintended effects of repatriation.

The repatriation migrations of the last three decades comprise a process of great meaning for Kazakhstan. The opening sentence of the introduction to a book by Bibiziya K. Kalshabayeva (2015: 14) is symptomatic:

> *There is no doubt that national integrity is the sole prerequisite for the development of our country. There-fore, in forming the national idea, the main task for the Republic of Kazakhstan is to carry out considerable research into the ethnic history of our compatriots who live abroad.*

Return migration is a type of movement deserving of special attention because of its entanglement in the social dynamics of Us and Them, of being familiar or foreign (Schütz 1964). Such migration is also worth examining due to reactions derived from the political interests of the accepting country *vis-à-vis* the interests of the emigrating individual (Nowicka 2008; Nowicka and Firouzbakhch 2008). The case of Kazakh return migrations, spanning over two decades now, provides us with much material of a general nature. The incoming repatriates have taken on a great dimension in Kazakhstan: among today's general population at least 10 per cent are newcomers – mostly return migrants. This phenomenon gives rise to reflection and enhances theoretical deliberations on the issue of return migration in Poland, in Europe or in the world.

The aim of the text at hand is to look at these Kazakh homecomings from two perspectives: 1) the goals and intentions of the Kazakhstan government as expressed in official repatriation policies and 2) the cultural transformation of Kazakh society itself as an effect of the repatriation process. Here I focus on the changes seeping into the dominant society as it responds to (*inter alia*) 'model Kazakhness' – a purer form preserved by isolation within an alien ethnic environment. The Kazakh case illustrates the dual influence of living in an emigrant milieu: this condition both changes and conserves the migrants' culture.

Commencing this investigation, I assumed the classic anthropological approach of fieldwork – collecting and verifying material on the basis of data triangulation. The primary sources included: 1) the responses of my Kazakh interlocutors, 2) legal documents on the subject of Kazakh return migration and 3) observation of the performed relations between the autochthonous and repatriated Kazakhs. Especially interesting was behaviour signaling attitudes and emotions.

Overall, a total of 23 interviews were conducted with repatriated Kazakh migrants and their families; 15 interviews on the subject of return migration were conducted with local, nonmigrants and four observations of contacts between 'natives' and 'newcomers' were recorded. This fieldwork was conducted in cooperation with a university in Kazakhstan – I was a guest of the Department of Archaeology and Ethnology and at the L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University in Astana. Between 20 June and 20 July 2016 I took part in a summer research fieldtrip near Toktamis in the Abay district of the East Kazakhstan region. During my second stay, between 12 and 27 March 2018 – precisely during the period of preparations and celebrations for *Nauryz* – I conducted research in Atyrau and then in the Alatau district of Almaty, as well as in various localities in the area of Uzynagash, the administrative centre of the Zhambyl district in the Almaty region of southeastern Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan and the Kazakhs: cultural and demographic context

The idea of home, the hometown or the fatherland is uniquely shaped in a society that is, to a great extent, territorially mobile. Historically speaking as well as contemporaneously (to some degree), Kazakhs comprise a nation with a culture anchored in the value system of nomadic, shepherding societies. This does not at all mean that the current majority of the country's inhabitants lead such a lifestyle, yet numerous traits remain in the Kazakh culture which warrant such a description. Nomadism and the customs associated with it – including important holidays and festivities which Soviet regimes were incapable of uprooting – are part and parcel of the entire cultural whole.

Nomadic life has always demanded particular kinds of behaviour – mutual assistance, hospitality and reciprocated support, although people are scattered – and hardiness under severe climatic conditions. Temperatures here can vary from deep frosts and snowstorms to heatwaves accompanied by abrupt shifts in humidity. The demanding natural environment and climate – together with the cultural patterns associated with traditional nomadism and shepherding – have left a keen imprint upon the remigration process among Kazakhs (Edmunds 1998).

In order to comprehend the social phenomena taking place over the last few decades in Kazakhstan – including the essence of the demographic and cultural policies of the government – one needs to consider its fundamental geographic and geopolitical characteristics (Sejdimbek 2012). The expanse of the territory stretches 2 724 900 square metres and yet, according to the latest census (2018), there are only 18 157 078 inhabitants, which means that the population density is relatively low. At the same time, Kazakhstan shares, geopolitically, some 12 187 kilometres of borders with its neighbours – the Russian Federation (6 467 km), Uzbekistan (2 300 km), China (1 460 km), Kirghizstan (980 km) and Turkmenistan (380 km).

In its current territorial and political shape, the Republic of Kazakhstan has existed for a little over a quarter of a century. The moment at which it became a sovereign state is usually considered the Declaration of Independence announced on 25 October 1995. However, a constitution for the autonomous Kazakhstan had already been passed on 16 December 1991 and, by 21 December, the Republic of Kazakhstan had been accepted into the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Furthermore, five days later, the country's independence had been recognised by the outgoing USSR.

Still, the new nation-state had to face (and, to some extent, is still facing) numerous social problems – among them those connected with a cultural coherence. In fact, the most significant dilemma is familiarity with and fluency in the Kazakh language among the country's inhabitants. As the 2009 census illustrated, 74 per cent of the population declared having an understanding of Kazakh while only 62 per cent declared actual fluency. That same census showed a larger percentage of the mostly bilingual population declaring some knowledge of Russian (85 per cent, including 80 per cent of the Kazakhs themselves) („Demographics of Kazakhstan", Wikipedia 2019).

In recent decades, Kazakhstan has experienced serious demographic transformations. Actually, such phenomena are not new to this territory; population movements have been occurring for centuries whereas rapid demographic shifts have characterised the entire history of the Kazakhs. As a result of a massive immigration of Slavs onto this territory, the Kazakhs themselves became a minority in their homeland by the eighteenth century. This situation lasted for the next few years although, in 1897, Kazakhs comprised 82.5 per cent and the Russians 10.9 per cent of the inhabitants overall. Consequently, Marek Gawęcki (2007: 127) dubbed the Russian-language segment of the Kazakhstan population 'the fourth *zhuz*' – a tribal unit in the traditional structure of Kazakh society.

By the time of the 1959 census, the number of Russian residents in Kazakhstan superseded the number of Kazakhs in the republic. It was not until 1989 that the Kazakhs barely overtook the Russians, even if the former

continued to be a minority when compared to all the other national groups taken together. As Olga Davydenko (2011: 23) wrote that 'in 1989 the Kazakh portion of the general population did not exceed 40 per cent (6 564 000); Russians constituted not much smaller a national group at 38 per cent (6 228 000), while representatives of other nations constituted 22 per cent' (see also Sadowskaja 2001). Towards the end of the Soviet Union's *perestroika* era, demographic changes were beginning: soon there would be a sudden outflow of non-Kazakhs, primarily the Russians.

The progressive changes in the ethnic make-up of the Kazakhstan population took place as a consequence of migratory processes. On the one hand, there were emigrations of non-Kazakh peoples while, on the other, there were immigrations (actually, returns) of Kazakhs from other countries back to Kazakhstan. As a result of these population movements, the proportions in the ethnic composition of the country quickly tipped in favour of the Kazakh population (Aleksejenko 2006).

Nonetheless, one of the characteristic traits of the territorial distribution of the Kazakh people is precisely their dispersal: according to current data, about 4 million Kazakhs live outside the Republic of Kazakhstan. Inhabiting Uzbekistan are about 1 500 Kazakhs; similar is the count in China, while Russia houses about 1 million. In Turkmenistan there are about 100 000 Kazakhs, in Mongolia 80 000 and, in Kirghizstan, 45 000. According to the third Great Kurultáj (a traditional gathering of Kazakhs), other countries such as Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan are occupied by smaller, more concentrated groups (http://nomad.su/?a=3-200509300128). The largest percentage of Kazakhs living beyond the borders of their homeland are the descendants of emigrants from the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s – runaways from repression, collectivisation and hunger. It is thought that about 200 000 Kazakhs abandoned the Soviet Union in favour of life in China, Mongolia, India, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey (see ru.wikipedia.org). Noted in the 1930s, however, was an increase of about 800 000 Kazakhs in these countries.

The Kazakh migrations in this period also bore an internal affairs dimension which – once Kazakhstan had achieved independence, tearing away first from the USSR and then from the Russian Federation – led to the Kazakhs finding themselves in separate nation-states. After all, many had escaped from their homeland to other republics of the former Soviet Union: between 1926 and 1930, the number of Kazakhs on the territories of other republics increased by 2.5 per cent or by more than 794 000. The exodus was of a political-economic nature, motivated by a fear of collectivisation and the Soviet-regime authorities (Kalshabayeva 2015).

Furthermore, the demographic transformation over the course of the last two decades has also been linked to both emigration and immigration factors which are functioning within Kazakhstan. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, a significant contingent of Russian-speaking, non-Kazakh nationals vacated the republic; various estimates are given for this wave but it ranges from a few hundred thousand to a few million. In fact, as of 1993, there was a radical drop in Kazakhstan's general population – dropping from 16 986 000 to 14 800 000 by 2001. It should be noted that this process had started earlier: between 1989 and 1999 the number of inhabitants decreased from 16 199 000 to 14 953 000. Over ten years, some 1.246 million people had left the country; some sources even approximate three million.

Nevertheless, since 2001, there has been a gradual increase in the country's population as a result of a rapid rise in the birth rate as well as the immigration of ethnic Kazakhs, back from other countries to Kazakhstan. According to the Agency of Demographics and Migrations, between 1991 and 1999, 43 000 Kazakh families (over 181 000 individuals) repatriated. Among them, 106 500 (roughly 60 per cent) came from the CIS (primarily from Russia and Uzbekistan), 64 000 from Mongolia and the remainder from Iran, Turkey, China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan (Davydenko 2011). It was already at the beginning of the 1990s that Kazakhs began to return from Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, China, Mongolia, Iran and Turkey. Between 1991 and 2015, some 953 908 Kazakhs returned: 61.5 per cent from Uzbekistan, 14.3 per cent from China, 9.3 per cent from Mongolia, 6.8 per cent from Turkmenistan, 4.6 per cent from Russia and 3.5 per cent from other countries.

In summary, although data details vary from source to source, official statistics covering the 25 years between 1991 and 2016 show nearly one million persons returning to Kazakhstan. These statistics include neither the children born within the country nor those whose migration transpired without any state assistance and without registration as repatriates. If these categories are also included, then the total exceeds one million – that is, 10 per cent of the Kazakh population in Kazakhstan. The process of remigration to Kazakhstan from various countries is a constant one, lasting to this day. The latest data show that, in 2017 alone, 159 Kazakhs returned from Uzbekistan, 28 from China, seven from Russia, and one each from Moldova, Turkey and Turkmenistan.

Government ethnic policies

As Chazanow (2018: 29) stated, after the collapse of the USSR, the soviet authorities of the republic immediately rejected the communist ideology, replacing it with a national one. The new policy did not assume a civism but rather an ethno-nationalism based upon a national movement of the *ethnos*.

Undertaking the topic of how and what official decisions are made in Kazakhstan, we need to seek clarity about the political and social structure of the country. On the one hand, the country is ruled centrally and resolutions are passed vertically from the top down (see Chazanow 2018; Golam 2013; Shukuralieva 2012). On the other, we cannot ignore the elements of traditional structure: divisions into the three supra-tribal *zhuzes* or tribes, sub-tribes and clans.

The soviet period weakened and, to some degree, violated elements of the pre-soviet sociopolitical structures of Kazakh society; nevertheless, it was not completely successful in dismantling it (Chazanow 2018). The presidential form of government is essentially a guarantee of state uniformity and consistency; its aim is to forestall potential decentralist tendencies in a young, nationally and religiously diverse republic. In 2009, however, the powers of the lower levels of government were expanded (see Bisztyga 2014). The centralised social (including the demographic) policy of President *Nursultan Nazarbayev* and his followers has been focused, first and foremost, on the Kazakhisation of the country's population – above all, this entails cultural Kazakhisation, especially linguistic.

In fact, the official language of the country is Kazakh, although Russian formally possesses equal status. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian language holds the status of a second official language. Article 7 of that document asserts in paragraph 1 that 'The state language of the Republic of Kazakhstan shall be the Kazak language'. Yet the next paragraph notes that 'In state institutions and local self-administrative bodies the Russian language shall be officially used on equal grounds along with the Kazak language' (Constituteproject.org 2019). Moreover, paragraph 3 proclaims acceptance of the languages of all the nations inhabiting the republic: 'The state shall promote conditions for the study and development of the languages of the people of Kazakhstan'.

Generally, the Russian language is used on a par with the Kazakh language in state organisations and local government agencies. Nevertheless, an authoritative order has decreed that at least 50 per cent of all radio and television programming be broadcast in Kazakh. Moreover, the names of various localities, towns, and cities are being rendered more traditionally Kazakh; some names are associated with Kazakh heroes, others with significant events in Kazakh history. This mother tongue has also been more strongly introduced into public life – particularly in state administration at all levels, including the local – because forms are printed solely in Kazakh. The Kazakhisation has affected education as well – there is a clear decrease in the number of hours dedicated to the teaching of Russian and in the number of schools in which Russian was the teaching language.

Somewhat paradoxically, this policy is part and parcel of a broader plan to maintain a semblance of multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism. Those concepts are presented as a rebuttal to the constant accusations of nationalism from the Russian-speaking segment of society as well as from the potent and powerful Russian neighbour. Therefore, multiculturalism is also underscored alongside Kazakh patriotism. There is a cult of international values which, overall, offers some sort of ideological whole, albeit self-contradictory.

Officially the country is multinational and based upon a friendship among all the many nations which have always lived on these lands. This official policy manifests itself in state promotional materials, at the most important public events and in the content communicated by the mass media. Yet accompanying this, at every step, is an underscoring of the dominant value of the titular nation – the primeval value of the 'native' over-riding those values described as 'non-native'. Serving to assuage any incongruities is an emphasis on information (previously hidden, undermined or derided) regarding the praiseworthy history and steppe life of the Kazakhs.

The leaders of Kazakhstan are attempting to form an ethnically Kazakh state, trying to compensate for the Russian-speaking population, who started to leave in the 1990s. Actually, many of the non-Kazakh population had found themselves within the republic's borders not of their own accord: some were workers ordered to move and bring 'civilization' to an 'economically backward' region, while others had been banished to this periphery under Stalinism. In truth, outside Siberia, it was Kazakhstan that was the most frequent destination to which people were deported and, hence, finding themselves here were various national groups (Koreans, Germans, Poles, etc.) (Diener 2006) as well as numerous stateless and other groups – Karacheyevs, Kalmyks, Chechnyans, Ingushtians, Balkarans, Tatars, Kurds, Bulgarians, Greeks, Turks, etc. (see Gawęcki 2007: 127 ff.).

The fundamental difference – one not verbalised but, rather, expressed in the actions taken by contemporary politicians in Kazakhstan – divides the citizens of the country into the native Kazakhs and the non-native immigrant population (meaning everyone else and particularly the Russian-speakers). Nevertheless, the language criterion is imprecise in practice because some of the ethnic Kazakhs do not speak Kazakh or speak it poorly and thus use Russian on a daily basis. Tensions ride high with regards to this issue. The attitude of the ethnically non-Kazakh, Russian-speaking minority is expressed well by Olga Davydenko (2011: 21):

The nonindigenous population (regardless of how many generations have lived in Kazakhstan) is subject to discrimination. Their access to certain public resources – such as higher education at the elite institutions in the country and prestigious professional employment – is limited.

It is true that Davydenko does assert that loyalty to the state (and above all to its current government) does assure citizens of equal treatment, yet the message underlying her text is univocally critical.

Repatriation as state policy

The politics of President (until March 2019) *Nursultan Nazarbayev* concentrated on the construction of a homogenous Kazakh society focused upon a shared culture, axiology and national pride. Still, a further aim of state policies has been the realisation of an idea to integrate the Euro-Asian continent, with the Republic of Kazakhstan playing a key role in this process. An engaged dialogue with the 'Turkish world' is also a concept at play (see Sadykova 2013).

The primary impetus for the cultural policy of re-Kazakhisation headed by President Nazarbayev and his supporters was, on the one hand, the emigration of the Russian-speaking population (those who, for various reasons, were weakly tied to Kazakhstan as a nation-state) and, on the other, the repatriation of Kazakhs who

(for various political and economic reasons) had previous emigrated from their homeland decades or generations earlier. Altogether, this was a policy targeting a disadvantageous demographic condition in the republic after the fall of the USSR. Additionally, actions taken as part of this policy were expected to demonstrate the extent of Kazakhstan's welcoming assistance beyond its borders. In 2005, *the President* noted that 'At the present moment, Kazakhs living abroad inhabit over 40 countries of the world. The majority of them are found in the countries neighbouring with Kazakhstan'. The far-reaching population movements in the country were and continue to be a consequence of moves taken by the centralised political authorities of Kazakhstan; the repatriation policy headed by President *Nazarbayev* has had a practical dimension.

Naturally, Kazakhstan's government had to undertake detailed and planned steps in connection with the distribution and 'management' of the incoming returnees whose numbers were not so small and were growing. The territorial distribution of the immigrating Kazakhs had to take into account, on the one hand (and most importantly), the interests of the country itself and, on the other, care and consideration for the incomers themselves – their economic, social and cultural adaptation. Currently, the largest concentration of returning migrants is found in the south – primarily the three southern provinces of South Kazakhstan, Almaty and Mangystau – and especially in the cities of Zhanaozen, Almaaty, Astana and Taraz. The government assumed that the incoming population would be evenly settled and not form tight neighbourhoods in large metropolises (which would most probably lead to socially detrimental ghettoisation). In effect, the greater part of the repatriates in the last wave did tend to settle in the capital or other large cities; this took place for the usual economic reason – it was relatively easier to find employment. As a consequence of this predisposition, the largest metropolises of Astana and Almaty were excluded from the planned system of settlement as of 2014.

Repatriate motivations for return

An obvious question which arises is what convinced Kazakhs in other countries to move 'home' to Kazakhstan. We can distinguish both the pull factors drawing them back as well as the push factors provoking departure from the places they had previously inhabited. Among the former factors was the suddenly very positive economic transformation – an advantageous economic climate that was linked to exploitation of the country's natural resources. Kazakhstan became an attractive destination in comparison to the generally more marginal, provincial, neglected and impoverished areas which these Kazakhs had inhabited elsewhere.

A significant incentive were the privileges created for and guaranteed to the repatriates by the government (e.g., financial assistance, concessions, etc.). Furthermore, nationwide there were 14 temporary housing centres for these immigrants. These concrete offers comprised a crucial form of persuasion, encouraging Kazakhs to resettle in their now-independent homeland. A new statute on the migration of people meant that migrants were legally assured of various subsidies and concessions. Among the numerous forms of succour and support for returning Kazakhs were:
 • employment and opportunities to improve or change job qualifications;
 • the creation of chances to learn the languages functioning in the country (e.g., both Kazakh and Russian);
 • the suspension of military service obligations;
 • affirmative action quotas in the technical and higher education systems;
 • government-allocated places in preschools, schools and social services;
 • pensions and benefits payments;
 • compensation for victims of the mass political repressions of the past;
 • the cancellation of visa fees for entrance into the Republic of Kazakhstan;
 • free public health care;
 • monetary subsidies for individuals with an income below the poverty line;

- the suspension of customs and duty payments;
- free transportation to the new place of residence in Kazakhstan (including the transport of property and livestock);
- one-time handouts; and
- subsidies for the purchase of housing in the new place of residence.

Specific items on this list of privileges had special meaning for specific incomers. For instance, crucial for returnees from Mongolia and China was the chance to move their livestock (the primary form of personal property which they possessed) free of transportation charges or customs payments. Stirred by great emotions in the recollection, immigrants told me how crossing the border into Kazakhstan was ultimately restricted by the Chinese authorities to a single day. Attempts were made to drive the entire herd across but, when it became impossible to accomplish this before the border was shut at night, part of the herd remained on the Chinese side of the border.

The factor which indubitably encouraged repatriation to Kazakhstan was a rapid improvement in living conditions. Economic development and a better living standard meant that Kazakhstan became an attractive leader among the states of Central Asia. Contributing to the economic growth were the profits from the exploitation of natural resources – above all, petroleum. There are settlements which, after the Soviet Union's collapse, were drained of their Russians, Germans, Poles, etc. After a while those emigrants were replaced by ethnic Kazakh immigrants.

Also playing a role in population movements were push factors. Midway into the first decade of the twenty-first century, the ethnic policies of China shifted. Prior to 2004, the Chinese government did not hinder the development of the Kazakh culture. As one repatriate from a town in the Huzha region recounted, 'There was no special autonomy but everything, including the authorities, was Kazakh' (interview PC18). Yet this respondent emphasised that, over the last several years, Chinese policies have become very antipathetic towards non-Chinese. Cultural pressures on minorities were made by the state – especially on those minorities living on lands which the Chinese state considered threatened. Forced assimilation was quickly introduced; Chinese became the sole teaching language in schools. At the beginning of the 2000s (and particularly as of 2004), Kazakhs began to sense negative attitudes: 'They forced us to speak in Chinese' (PC18).

The repatriates describe current Chinese politics as aiming at ethnic homogenisation and unification. This was achieved in part by introducing identity documents which do not indicate nationality but only citizenship: by this token Kazakhs, for instance, simply became Chinese. A second method of Sinoisation which Kazakhs from China indicate is the increase of ethnic Chinese settled into the region; after the emigration of the repatriates, the current situation is dramatically worsening because the remaining Kazakhs are becoming Chinese out of necessity.

Among Kazakhs there is a strong tradition and tendency not to intermarry with other nationalities. Therefore, as many of the repatriates underscore, the lack (for all practical purposes) of mixed marriages succoured the preservation of Kazakh culture.

A young imam – also a repatriate from China – recalled long years when Kazakhs in China enjoyed complete freedom of religion and mosques were found in every aul. Unfortunately, there was a clear turnaround in Chinese policies in 2007 with regards to other nationalities and religions. The imam himself cannot travel back to China; he assumes that he would be arrested and imprisoned. The changed conditions in China made repatriation to Kazakhstan a perfect solution. He undertook studies in a *medresa* (school or educational institution) after immigrating in 2010 and, three years later, qualified as an imam; he is capable of supporting himself and his family by trading and raising livestock.

The paradoxical consequences of transition programmes

The social welfare programmes tailored for Kazakh repatriates also have negative effects. The populace is divided into two categories: those who are entitled to assistance and those who are not. Kazakhstan-born Kazakhs see the help afforded to the incoming Kazakhs as an unwarranted injustice. Unfair are the special rights, the financial support and other privileges given to the 'prodigal sons', exceeding what is offered to other citizens of the country.

Nevertheless, the repatriates themselves criticise the local and national government due to the level of disorganisation. Theoretically, returning Kazakhs were due to receive help in housing their families and livestock but, in practice, much depended on the local authorities. Tensions and conflicts arose at this level. Among my respondents, there was a family of six, returnees from Uzbekistan, which was unable to elicit any sort of help (although guaranteed by law) in the Almaty area. These repatriates blamed ill-will not on the part of the Kazakhstan government in general but on a specific individual – the head of the village administration.

Interesting, too, is that Mongolian websites claim that over 1 600 Kazakh emigrants to Kazakhstan now wish to return to Mongolian citizenship. Purportedly, the Kazakhs from Mongolia complain that they were fooled by a criminal trick played on them by the Kazakhstan state as well as others who 'lured money out of pockets'. Furthermore, they experienced problems in getting their earned retirement pensions sent from Mongolia to Kazakhstan. The tone taken by the Mongolian press is critical of the Kazakhstan leaders for their lack of democratic standards. The government in the capital is somewhat indifferent about such matters; letters sent to President Nazurbayev brought no results. Kazakhs from China also grumble about the bureaucracy and unresponsiveness of the republic's government.

A few factors underlie the expectations which the immigrating Kazakhs associated with their decisions to relocate – usually with their entire families. On the one hand, there was surely the myth of the ideological homeland; on the other, probably as frequent, there were the negative changes in their situation as members of an ethnic minority in the destination country of their previous emigration. As noted earlier, this pertains, above all, to the numerous Kazakhs inhabiting China. Still, once back in Kazakhstan, it turned out that the government's promises did not always turn out to be so tangible. It is not only the Kazakhs from China who complain – so do those from Karakalpakstan, a district of Uzbekistan. My respondents from there remembered their arrival in a town close to Almaty where they had been promised various kinds of amenity. Ultimately, they had to forge their own destiny, living in poverty, labouring hard and not meeting with any kindness from the local authorities. There are people whose children moved to Kazakhstan for higher education, whereas their parents experienced difficulties in moving, even if they did not wish to live elsewhere. These persons also protest about poor treatment by the Kazakhstan state.

One of the topics of grievance and bitter comments is the behaviour shown towards the re-migrants as being the worst sort of people. On the one hand, those arriving from outside Kazakhstan – even if they are unquestionably brothers ethnically – were and continue to be perceived as less educated, backward, less civilized and primitive in comparison with those seen as 'natives'. On the other hand, the incomers see themselves as more traditionally pure, capable of preserving Kazakh culture in its most time-honoured form. This was a decisive distinction – something that bestowed a higher place on the social ladder of prestige.

The meandering process of adaptation

Even if it has not evoked acts of aggression, the adaptation process has been complex and complicated. The repatriation programme installed new divisions and social distances within the already diverse society of Ka-

zakhstan. The nature of repatriates' social integration varies and depends upon when and from where the returnees have come. Here, both push and pull factors emerge – above all, those rooted in the living standards of the origin country *vis-à-vis* those found in Kazakhstan.

Coming into play are:

- the different civilisational conditions and daily-met difficulties compared to the country of previous residence;
- the political relations, tensions or even maltreatment in the country of previous residence; and
- the degree to which Kazakhstan is economically and politically attractive.

Those among the immigrants who find living conditions in Kazakhstan decidedly more advantageous and more promising have more easily dealt with the hurdles associated with their necessary adaptation to a new sociocultural milieu. This pertains, most of all, to those who foresee better chances for the social advancement of their children and those who encountered the cultural and social freedom (free of a sense of otherness, humiliation or persecution) of which they had dreamed.

As signaled earlier in this paper, the process of adaptation was not without its local conflicts or evoked stereotypes. The native majority in Kazakhstan dubbed ethnically Kazakh immigrants from other countries as *oralmans* – literally signifying 'incomer' – but with pejorative connotations. The appearance of this colloquial term, which both differentiated and discriminated the Kazakh re-migrants, was an unintended effect of the government policies drawing Kazakhs back to their sovereign homeland. However, this effect counteracted the intentions of the policies and, hence, did not go unnoticed by the Kazakhstan authorities, who reacted very vigorously against this phenomenon: use of this offensive word was officially forbidden in both public and private spheres. Nevertheless, it was not always the case that repatriates were greeted with open arms by Kazakhs living in a given area. Especially in localities in rural regions, the incoming Kazakhs continually meet with troubles in relationships with the local residents.

Language and customs

Oddly enough, a significant impediment to in-migrants' adaptation to contemporary Kazakhstan is their lack of knowledge of the Russian language. Among other things, speaking Russian can be considered as an essential skill for employment. Different republics of the former Soviet Union had employed a variety of alphabets and Cyrillic is still used in Kazakhstan.[1] Unfamiliarity with this alphabet today can be a communication barrier in contacts with locals in Kazakhstan.

Illustrating the convolutions for the repatriates is the fact that both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan first used Arabic script, followed by Cyrillic then, after 1991, the Latin alphabet. In China, however, the Kazakhs there used Arabic, as they had even before the revolution. Likewise the Kazakhs arriving in smaller groups from Turkey, Afghanistan or Iran see Cyrillic as an unknown. Generally speaking, communication difficulties particularly affect the older generations, with the exception of those from Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Kirghizstan and Turkmenistan, where Kazakhs had also used Cyrillic (albeit sometimes adorned with unique diacritical marks).

Aside from fluency in the Russian language and the Cyrillic alphabet, the return migrants stood out from the Kazakhstan-born population due to numerous cultural traits which had been preserved or had developed over decades (i.e., generations) of living in a foreign social milieu and in isolation from the core Kazakh ethnos. As a result, the two kinds of Kazakhs differed (and continue to differ) from one another in their lifestyles, their vocations and jobs and their familiar natural environments and population densities. For instance, most of the Mongolian Kazakhs had previously lived on the steppes in miniscule familial settlements separated by great distances. Key in the mutual relations between the Kazakhstan Kazakhs and the repatriates was that it was the

latter group which turned out to be more orthodox in tradition and customs. In fact, this was crucial to the role which the repatriates saw themselves as playing – that they be resolutely more traditional.

The clash of the two kinds of Kazakhs made it clearly evident that those in Kazakhstan had significantly russified. Knowledge of the mother tongue was nearly always deeper among repatriates than it was among the majority of the native Kazakhs. This was true not only in comparison with the population raised in the USSR but also in comparison with those persons whose youth (earlier or later) had coincided with the independent Kazakhstan – a period in which the leadership had placed a strong emphasis on the reinstatement of a full, deep-seated and universal fluency in Kazakh. Among the individuals whom I interviewed, the one theme which surfaced repeatedly was unfamiliarity with the Russian language. This was the hurdle they underscored as the most fundamental in the first year or so of life in Kazakhstan. In truth, certain of the repatriates from China (living 70 kilometres from Almaty) – even after 12 years – still do not speak Russian.

Nonetheless, these returning migrants do highlight the fact that Kazakhstan Kazakhs are speaking in their mother tongue ever more frequently and better – and this, quite naturally, leads to better communication between the two groups of Kazakhs than at the outset. Therefore the adaptation here is not on the part of the immigrants but among the native population: the latter shifted to the use of the Kazakh language on a daily basis. The repatriates have taken notice and state:

> *Already the children are learning and the youth know their own language. Now in the shops even the Russians can make themselves understood in simple Kazakh* (PC2).

In the village of *Kidirbekuli* (Uzynagash district, Almaty region) I learned from a younger immigrant (who arrived eight years previously from Karakalpakstan in Uzbekistan) that the school in her village no longer offered Russian-language classes; even the few Russian children living in the area are learning Kazakh. All subjects are taught in Kazakh with the exception of the mandatory second languages of Russian and English. Returnees from various other countries now claim that – as of the last few years – a lack of fluency in Russian is no longer a problem. The linguistic re-Kazakhisation of the country is strongly advocated by the repatriates – perfectly matching the grand nationwide scheme of Kazakhstan's leaders.

In any case, the local Kazakh population was antipathetic in its initial attitude towards the incomers. Among other things, this was manifested in the use of the word *oralman*, as described above. This situation has improved, however, thanks to the transformations of Kazakh society as a whole. Today, children are taught in schools that those who have come from afar to settle in Kazakhstan 'should be hosted; we should set the table, offer them food, and get to know one another' (D3).

Emigration, isolation and Kazakhness

Apart from their better and untainted familiarity with the national language, those Kazakhs who immigrated to Kazakhstan also brought back age-old Kazakh customs. In a word, it is the repatriates who are influencing many dimensions of an intended and steered process to culturally 'Kazakhise' their fatherland.

My respondents, repatriated from many directions, confirm that they and other Kazakhs living outside the homeland were less affected by the russification and other forms of homogenisation which emerged from the soviet lifestyle. This has been observed both by people coming from Uzbekistan (which was in the USSR until 1991) and by those coming from China and Mongolia (also under communist regimes). With great pride, the returnees accentuate their knowledge of Kazakh traditions – better knowledge than that which remained in Kazakhstan. They recount how some dances which had been totally forgotten in Kazakhstan have been restored precisely thanks to the *oralmans*: 'This is thanks to the Kazakhs coming in from China where the [*kara zhorga*]

was preserved – and now it is danced in Kazakhstan' (DE3). This pertains to the replanting of folk arts both on a countrywide scale as well as at the regional and very local levels.

The fact that the incomers were emigrés living in a foreign environment paradoxically led to the preservation of more traditional forms of the Kazakh customs and rituals of olden days. This includes the religious rites of the most important holy day of *Nauryz* (the archaic New Year celebration of Zoroastrian heritage), which is currently being reinstated to its former glory by the national government (Penkala-Gawęcka 2009; Suraganova 2017). Of all the cultural elements identified by the repatriated respondents, this marking of the New Year has manifested itself as crucial to Kazakh culture. It is intertwined with that culture and lends it a uniqueness.

However, *Nauryz* was banned in 1926 as part of the soviet policy of secularisation but returned in 1989 when discrimination against traditions perceived as religious or sacral began to ebb. Kazakhs who lived outside the Soviet Union for at least two generations were able to maintain this holy day's traditional celebration. Its vivid spectacle clashes with the pale version marked within Kazakhstan. Interviews with both Kazakh intellectuals and with the simple folk of rural areas yielded opinions that the Kazakhs returning from Mongolia and China have conserved *Nauryz* in its primal, authentic Turkic form. Living for decades in China, the Kazakh emigrants had conserved all of the key components of a very complicated celebration.

The repatriates themselves take advantage of every occasion to underscore their better and fuller familiarity with both the language and culture. One of my interviewees, a woman from China, spoke of how, in the region of Xinjiang, they had observed *Nauryz*, following the traditions with great care and passing them down from generation to generation. The permanence of the intergenerational transmission was succoured by the relative freedom of religion in China where, until the twenty-first century, there was no ban on religious rituals. Still, the performance of the rites was of necessity different in the steppes of Kazakhstan and in the more dense settlement in China. Moreover, *Nauryz* was celebrated there on 11 February rather than in March, as was the case in their homeland.

Interviewees spoke of preparations that lasted several months. Autumn was a period when, as everywhere among Kazakhs, horsemeat was dried and conserved for subsequent use in a special sausage for the holiday – *nauryz kaza*. This sausage was made of the remainder of the horsemeat, whatever lasted until the preparation stage before *Nauryz*. A woman raised in China recounted how, in each home, in the *aule*, a special holiday dish was made – *nauryz kozhe*. Into *kefir* (fermented milk) go the grains of various cereals as well as macaroni-like noodles; however, the final ingredient is *kurt*, a dried cheese. She accented the fact that this was not '*kurt* bought in a store but *kurt* specially prepared for this occasion. You don't just go and buy *kurt* as it sometimes happens in Kazakhstan' (CH2). The homemade version is sundried and more tangy. Over the course of two days, each person will visit every other person in the community with the obligatory sharing of this soup. Everyone greets one another, demonstrating friendship and mutual kindness. With traditional foodstuffs prepared in a traditional way the Kazakhs express joy at having survived the winter in health along with their herds. It is not only in the northern parts of their homeland that winter brings chilly frosts and wolves put both humans and animals in harm's way.

Similar are the accounts of traditional *Nauryz* celebrations among Kazakhs in Mongolia. Wherever families lived in great isolation from one another on the steppes, the holiday *nauryz kozhe* was left in a great caldron at home while the family went to visit and be hosted by distant neighbours. People rarely met each other personally but, since their yurts were open and a meal was in the caldron, any guests could serve themselves and symbolically be with the hosts. Everyone did likewise, going from yurt to yurt. At home today, in a Kazakh village, a huge table is simply laden with food (mostly meat) but one and all underscore how very closely they followed the *Nauryz* traditions in foreign lands.

The consequences of Kazakh repatriation to the fatherland

One of the effects of return migration to the nation-state is the impact it has on the re-Kazakhisation of the language and culture of Kazakhstan society. Nevertheless, alongside this integrative influence – which is in concurrence with the national government's intentions – another process takes place which is completely unforeseen by and contradictory to those intentions. This is best illustrated by the contemporary way in which *Nauryz* is celebrated – a feast whose essential function is to bind everyone together (including those of other ethnicities). A new, heretofore unknown, division, inconsistent with the communality of this holiday, has appeared. Kazakhs coming to the Almaty region from Nukus in Uzbekistan are celebrating the holy days together in their own tightknit circle, sitting at a table solely in their own company. Kazakhs coming from China are acting in a similar way, thus emphasising their smaller communal belonging in opposition to the rest. They feel the most comfortable amongst their own, separate from other residents in their current Kazakhstan village. Incomers from Mongolia organise a long table at home, set with many traditional dishes, while neighbours peregrinate from dwelling to dwelling. Because the village is primarily inhabited by repatriates from Mongolia, they come together in their own clique, although (as tradition dictates) all doors are open to everyone.

A sense of being different or strange is without basis along ethnocultural lines. Any differentiation of repatriates from Uzbekistan's Karakalpakstan or from the Chinese and Mongolian borderlands can only stem from knowledge about the origins of each sub-group. After all, they mostly speak pure, unaccented Kazakh and, physically, nothing distinguishes them from other Kazakhs. Therefore, paradoxically, *Nauryz* – instead of uniting individuals into a single society – is beginning to underscore divergence and divisions.

This form of self-isolation could be interpreted as the effect of rejection and thus communities of cast-offs are beginning to form. The pejorative *oralman* is used against them and also appears sometimes as a slur during quarrels and conflicts. Wherever repatriates and native Kazakhstan residents inhabit a single locality, the sense of community is forced and ties are strained. Being constantly associated with their place of origin (despite belonging to the same nationality) leads to the formation of new bonds. Notwithstanding the policies of the centralised government, which is attempting to ensure a quick economic and educational start in Kazakhstan, new forms of otherness emerge according to birthplace territory criteria. The privileges accorded the incomers – stemming from concerns for their welfare and chances of assimilation – arouse envy which, instead of bringing citizens together, is building antipathy and distance.

Conclusions

Observation of the adaptation process undergone by returning Kazakh migrants and the effects of this process on the overall culture of Kazakhstan suggests a few hypotheses of a more general nature. One of these (worth keeping in mind during return migration fieldwork) is that a state of longer sequestration from the mainstream national development is decisive in the conservation and preservation of cultural characteristics. This is confirmed, for instance, by the situation of Poles who voluntarily moved to Eastern Siberia and who continue to inhabit the village of Vershina (see Nowicka and Głowacka-Grajper 2003) or the Poles in Parana, Brazil, who had left their homeland at the end of the nineteenth century (see Kula 1981).

Nonetheless, the cause–effect relationship is a bit more complicated which means, for example, that factors which act as intermediary variables should be noted (see Nowicka and Firouzbakhch 2008). Under circumstances in which the development of the national core has introduced certain changes, those members of the community who emigrated are automatically excluded from the mainstream; after all, they themselves have been subject to other kinds of change as a consequence of living as a minority in a culturally different milieu. Illustrating the complications well is the case of the forced emigration of Greeks to communist Poland, followed

significantly later by a voluntary repatriation to their fatherland (Nowicka 2008). Not to be overlooked in this regard is the well-known sketch by Alfred Schütz – *The Homecomer* (1964) – in which we also find illustrations of this concept in a study of war veterans coming home, along with substantiations of a general theory of homecoming.

Hence, running parallel to isolation from any and all transformations taking place in the native country are the effects of adaptation to the conditions in the country of immigration. Influencing the intensity of the latter are numerous factors which either increase or decrease the impact of the new country's culture on the core cultural characteristics of the migrants. Apart from isolation, another pivotal factor at play in the above phenomenon is the hierarchisation of a person's own group *vis-à-vis* the dominant group in the new country. If a person's native group is positioned higher on the social ladder of the immigration country, the chances of maintaining various forms of the traditional home culture are higher. The reverse is also true: the lower (in its own perception) the guest community is *vis-à-vis* the host society, the lesser the chances of preserving cultural patterns carried over from the homeland.

Another aspect to distinguish is the process of re-adaptation by refugee individuals exiled from their homeland as opposed to that of individuals who emigrated of their own free will. This is associated with a distinction between repatriation and return migration. Here I would suggest identification of different types of repatriation. One category would be ideological versus private repatriation – along the same lines as the ideological versus private homeland proposed by Stanisław Ossowski (1984) many years ago. The fatherland can mean (as is often the case) the place in which a person was born and raised and to which educational or economic emigrants return – or from which the individual was exiled and then subsequently resettled from a private homeland back to the ideological one. The case of Kazakh returns to the Republic of Kazakhstan illustrates the latter: a return to a place where (usually) the immigrants had never lived before, where they are treated as individuals who are – to some degree – entangled by the bonds of an ideological, national community.

Note

[1] It should be noted, however, that there are ever-more-advertised plans to change over to the Latin alphabet, which better facilitates the phonetic representation of Turkic languages to which Kazakh belongs.

Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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— Special Series —

International Migration from Ukraine: Will Trends Increase or Go into Reverse?

Hanna Vakhitova* , Agnieszka Fihel**

Ukraine remains today one of the main migrant sending countries in Europe, with thousands of Ukrainians working in Czechia, Italy, Poland and Russia. In this regard, Ukraine shares the previous experience of Central European countries such as the Baltic States, Poland and Slovakia, that in the 1990s and early 2000s registered first temporary, and later permanent, outflows. In more recent years, however, many Central and Eastern European countries started to register increasing numbers of immigrants and some of them have switched from net sending to net receiving migration regimes. The objective of this article is to discuss the possibility of a similar turnaround in Ukraine; to this end, we investigate the main quantitative data on migration from and to Ukraine, and interpret this information in the light of selected theoretical approaches that have been used to explain migration in Central and Eastern Europe. The available data reveal high levels of labour emigration of both temporary and permanent character, the increasing propensity of migrants to settle down in the host countries, and the growing involvement of the youngest cohorts in the emigration. Despite this evidence we argue that the current situation by no means constitutes a premise for reversing the outflow from Ukraine. We conclude that the most recent improvements in general economic indicators will not lead to high levels of immigration without an active labour market policy towards foreigners.

Keywords: Central and Eastern Europe, international migration, migration transition, quantitative data, Ukraine

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Introduction

The communist period in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) was marked by a strict regulation and limitation of people's international or, within the Soviet Union, inter-republic mobility. The disintegration of political regimes in the German Democratic Republic, Poland and the countries that followed the pro-democratic path of changes, the announcement of independence in former Soviet republics, and most importantly, the decay of the hitherto unipolar economic system in which the Soviet Union played the central role, allowed a true explosion of westward and intra-CEE mobility (Fihel, Kaczmarczyk, Okólski 2007). In the turbulent times of the 1990s and 2000s, mobility from and within the CEE region, if any generalisation about the phenomenon of international mobility encompassing all the post-communist countries is possible at all, could be described by three main characteristics (Bruecker *et al.* 2009; Fihel *et al.* 2007; Okólski 2000): 1) large numbers, 2) with predominant labour component, and 3) consisting of a multitude of forms and patterns, both relative to specific countries and the entire CEE region. The international mobility of Ukrainian nationals, as we strive to show in the following sections, constitutes no exception here.

The outflow from Ukraine has been increasing in recent years, fuelled by a prolonged economic and political crisis and warlike events in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. With more than 700 000 first-time residence permits issued to Ukrainian nationals in 2018 (Eurostat 2020), the latter became the largest group of temporary migrants in the European Union (EU). Poland, which three decades ago was itself the main sending country in Europe, became the main destination for Ukrainian migrants including not only temporary workers, but also students and permanent labour migrants. A growing number of the CEE countries being the new EU member states become destinations for increasing numbers of foreign nationals, including Ukrainians: Czechia and Hungary register positive net migration balances since the early 2000s, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia since the 2010s. Is Ukraine following the same path as Poland and other CEE countries, evolving from a country of high emigration to one attracting foreigners and actively enhancing labour immigration? The objective of this article is to discuss the possibility that Ukraine will soon become a net receiving migration country, which would result from a simultaneous reduction in emigration and increase in return migration and/or immigration. In this article, we look for any signs of migration transition (Chesnais 1992, 1986) in Ukraine, that is, a transition from a net sending regime with a negative migration balance, to a net receiving regime with a positive migration balance. These signs would include an increased emigration of permanent character (and decrease in temporary mobility), or greater return migration and inflow of foreign nationals, which is similar to the previous experiences of Western European countries or present experiences in some CEE countries where a massive outflow was replaced by large-scale immigration. To investigate this issue, we examine the main quantitative data on migration from and to Ukraine, in particular administrative sources and the Labour Force Survey, conducted both in Ukraine and the main destination countries in Europe. We review these sources of data in a critical way, providing a reflection on the extent to which these data apply to real mobility to and from Ukraine.

This article is constructed as follows; first, we investigate the economic, social and institutional circumstances relating to the situation in Ukraine in the post-communist period, which can serve as the contextual background for international mobility. Second, we present the main sources of quantitative data on migration of Ukrainian nationals, the usefulness of these data in reflecting international migration to and from Ukraine, and discuss the main tendencies in this migration, in particular labour migration. Finally, we interpret the tendencies in international mobility in the light of previous experiences of other countries in the CEE region and selected theoretical approaches that have been used to explain migration in this part of Europe.

The economic, socio-demographic and institutional background

Ukraine's post-Soviet transition to a democratic institutional system and market economy created unusual circumstances favouring international mobility mostly for economic purposes. The singularity of this transition consists of two incompatible forces: an economic and socio-demographic crisis on the one hand, underlying the increased potential for labour migration, and the lack of institutional settings in the European destination countries facilitating settlement emigration, on the other hand. We will focus here on the most important factors constituting this incompatibility.

As for the former, many authors claim that out of all post-communist countries in the CEE region, Ukraine has experienced one of the least successful transitions from a planned to a market economy (Braithwaite, Grootaert and Milanovic 2016; Guriev 2018). In the early 1990s all European post-Soviet countries registered a similar level of GDP per capita (World Bank 2020b). Ukraine's GDP was declining from 1991 till 1999, which was the longest period among its counterparts. In 2020 Ukraine finds itself in the most unfavourable position as compared to all neighbouring countries including Moldova, with GDP per capita equal to US$3 200 (US$8 600 if adjusted for purchasing power parity). According to the World Bank, in 2018 the productivity of the Ukrainian economy, measured as GDP per persons in employment, was three times lower than in Poland and almost four times lower compared to Turkey. Similarly, salaries in Ukraine are low (Malynovska 2016, 2019); even if adjusted for purchasing power parity, an average wage is from two to four times lower than in neighbouring countries. In particular, in 2020 the average PPP-adjusted wage in Ukraine is less than half that in Poland.

Such unfavourable phenomena as corruption and rent-seeking behaviours of emerging economic elites prevented stable economic growth in Ukraine (Aslund 2009; Gorodnichenko and Grygorenko 2008; Guriev 2018; Sutela 2012). In terms of ease of doing business Ukraine has been poorly ranked: according to the World Bank (2020a), in 2011 the country was at the 145th place and in 2014 at the 112th place out of 189 countries. After the introduction of market-oriented reforms, Ukraine moved to 83rd place in 2015 and 64th place in 2020 which is still far below the highest among the countries of the former Soviet bloc (where Lithuania ranks 11th, Estonia – 18th, Russia – 28th, Poland – 40th, Moldova – 48th and Belarus – 49th). Among positive macroeconomic results achieved recently one should also note a significant reduction in inflation, from 43 per cent in 2015 to 5 per cent in 2018.

Box 1. Brief information about Ukraine

Population: 42 million persons (2019)
GDP: US$ 153.8 billion (2019)
Territory: 603 500 km^2 (the second largest in Europe and the 45th largest worldwide)
Borders: total length – 6 992 km, (including 1 355 km of sea border). Border with the Russian Federation – 2 295.04 km, Moldova – 1 222 km, Belarus – 975.2 km, Romania – 613.8 km, Poland – 542.39 km, Hungary – 136.7 km, Slovakia – 97.9 km.
Ethnic groups: Ukrainians – 77.8%, Russians – 17.3%, Belarusians – 0.6%, Moldovans – 0.5%, Crimean Tatars – 0.5% (according to the 2001 Census)
Languages: the official language is Ukrainian
Human Development Index: 0.750, ranks 88 out of 189 (2019)

Source: authors' elaboration based on World Bank and State Statistics Service of Ukraine.

Since 2014 the Ukrainian economy has been further damaged by the Russian annexation of Crimea and the war with Russian-backed separatists at the eastern border (Drbohlav and Jaroszewicz 2016). According to the State Statistics Committee, in 2013 Crimea (together with Sevastopol) was home to 2.3 million persons and contributed 4 per cent to GDP. The Donetsk and Luhansk regions accounted for 14 per cent of GDP, 25 per cent of total exports and approximately 6.7 million persons. As of July 2020, 1.47 million persons were registered in Ukraine as internally displaced (IDP) (UNHCR 2020) and roughly 500 000 persons moved to Ukraine without registering as IDPs (Vakhitova and Iavorskyi 2020). About 70 per cent of the registered displaced population are children, pensioners and disabled (*ibidem*). Slightly above 400 000 persons were displaced to Russia and up to 100 000 applied for asylum or obtained refugee status in other countries. Overall, Ukraine lost approximately 3.2–3.9 million persons due to this war (Vyshnevskiy n.d.).

These population losses add to the demographic decline that has been taking place in Ukraine since the early 1990s. In the period 1991–2020 the population decreased by about 9.5 million inhabitants (14 per cent) in total. Ukraine registered the unfavourable demographic trends that have also been observed, but to a lower extent, in other European post-communist countries (Fihel and Okólski 2019): low fertility, relatively high mortality and stagnating life expectancy at birth. Since 1986, the total fertility rate has remained below the replacement level, reaching in 2017 the so-called lowest-low level of 1.37 children per woman. Life expectancy at birth in 2018 was as low as 71.5 years (as compared to the EU average of 81 years). Low fertility and high out-migration, as described in the following section, contributed to the population ageing and labour force decline which, even despite a recent rise in wage levels and increased age of retirement, is expected to reach 15 per cent by 2030 as compared to 2015 (IMF 2019).

With social and economic transition towards a liberal economic system stagnating for decades, Ukrainians tend to have a rather low level of trust in formal institutions (Fonseca, Pereira and Esteves 2014; Golovakha and Gorbachyk 2014) and to rely upon family and friends. Ukrainians distrust central authorities and political parties (Golovakha and Gorbachyk 2014; Razumkov Centre 2020). According to the European Social Survey (ESS 2012), Ukrainian nationals have relatively low engagement with local authorities and their trust in the judicial system is among the lowest in Europe, and lower than in countries of the European Union. Ukrainians' trust in parliament in 2011 (the latest year when Ukraine participated in the survey) was 1.99 points on a 10-point scale, trust in the judiciary – 2.26 points, and trust in the police – 2.50 points, reaching in all these domains the last place among 26 European countries. In terms of trust in politicians (1.85 points), Ukraine was ahead of only Greece, and in terms of trust in political parties (1.99 points), it was ahead of only Greece and Croatia and similar to Bulgaria. Ukrainians also demonstrated a relatively low level of life satisfaction and happiness (Guriev 2018).

This deep and long-lasting crisis, embracing the economic (one of the lowest GDP per capita in the region, low wages and corruption), demographic (dramatically low fertility and accelerated population ageing) and social aspects (low trust in state institutions) constitutes an important basis for labour out-migration from Ukraine. Importantly, in 2016 the Ukrainian economy started to recover: in this year an increase in GDP and in the average wage level was registered; two years later the unemployment rate started to decrease. But this recovery is taking place in the context of low demographic dynamics and emigration, which both contributed to reduce the labour supply in the domestic labour market. Consequently, the first signs of labour shortages have been observed in selected economic sectors: construction (Pieńkowski 2020), the food processing industry (OECD 2015), and high-skilled jobs (Czapliński and Dzhaman 2019), such as the IT sector and health care services.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, international mobility remained relatively limited, the reason being the institutional settings in the main destination countries, notably the EU. Consequently, Ukrainian migrants searched for ways of getting around these restrictions in the destination countries. In the case of migration to Poland in the 1990s and the early 2000s, Ukrainians used family ties that facilitated both short-term and permanent migration (Górny, Grzymała-Kazłowska, Kępińska, Fihel and Piekut 2007). As for another flow, to Italy and

Spain, tolerance of informal employment and poorly enforced entry restrictions combined with the wage differential stimulated high irregular migration (Finotelli and Echeverria 2017). At the beginning, in the 1990s, Italy and Spain became particularly popular among migrants from the western regions of Ukraine, close to the border with Romania with the highest share of Romanian speakers (ethnic Romanians and Moldovans) who had acquaintances in Romania and Moldova. So established ties played a crucial role in assisting and maintaining migration flows from the western parts of Ukraine and later on, in the 2000s, from different parts of the country. Eventually, Italian and Spanish governments conducted several regularisation programmes for undocumented immigrants, in order to re-gain control over the situation (Finotelli and Arango 2011).

CEE countries, in particular Poland, Czechia, and Hungary, pursue active migration-promoting policies aimed especially at Ukrainians (Libanova 2018). Hungary explicitly targets Ukrainian citizens of Hungarian origin, generously granting Hungarian citizenship under a simplified procedure and offering favourable educational opportunities. A Polish Card (*Karta Poliaka*), even though it is also said to only confirm Polish origin or strong ties, offers a card holder a very generous preferential status in matters of education, work and business, and also facilitates obtaining settlement status and citizenship in Poland. At the same time, Poland and, to a smaller degree, Czechia mostly focus on short-term labour mobility and students' migration. After accessing the EU in 2004 and joining the Schengen zone in 2007, the booming Polish economy attracted increasing interest from Ukrainian migrants and also experienced a high unsatisfied demand for labour. As early as 2006, Poland introduced special procedures for citizens of the country's eastern neighbours, including Ukraine, willing to work on a temporary basis in agriculture. In 2007 this was expanded to temporary employment in all economic sectors and, in subsequent years, to other eastern countries: Armenia, Georgia and Moldova (Kaczmarczyk 2015). Poland significantly modified its migration policy, aiming to attract legal employees who are likely to easily adapt in Polish society with skills required by the Polish labour market. Among measures facilitating this, Poland has liberalised employment and legalisation procedures, extended the validity of temporary residence permits and signed a bilateral social security agreement with Ukraine. In a few years Poland overtook Italy as the largest EU destination for Ukrainian migration (Malynovska 2019). In 2017 the European Commission applied a visa-free regime within the EU to Ukraine nationals, which constituted another important measure facilitating international mobility, this time for touristic reasons. It is not known to what extent the abolishment of visa requirement encouraged Ukrainian nationals to migrate to the EU with the purpose of undertaking irregular employment, but one can presume that in general, the liberalisation of mobility to EU member states provided a possibility of doing reconnaissance trips, tightening ties with Ukrainian diaspora and establishing contacts with possible employers and transnational intermediary and employment agencies.

Quantitative data on international migration: a critical overview

The quality, comparability and coherence of international migration data is a well-recognised problem both in the research and the social policy practice (Lemaitre 2005; UN 1998). There are several factors behind this situation: some difficulties are purely technical, related to variation in definitions, while other obstacles are caused by problems with data collection or a country's specifics (Chorniy *et al.* 2014). Moreover, while inflows can be to some extent approximated by official records of work and stay permits, immigrants' presence in the population registers, population censuses, asylum-seekers registers etc., emigration is a particularly difficult phenomenon to track. In a sending country, administrative sources are poorly adapted to identify persons who are no longer in the population, whereas register data collected in most important destinations are often not sufficiently coherent and comparable with each other. For the countries of Central and Eastern Europe an additional methodological problem arises from the short-term character of mobility, which hinders establishing a common definition of a migrant and measuring the flows. Sources of quantitative data on migration to and

from Ukraine are no exception, and three types of data: derived from administrative sources, social surveys and destination countries' registers, are discussed here.

Population census and administrative sources in Ukraine

The Ukrainian administrative sources include the population census, register of residence changes and the State Border Control data. As for the former, the last population census took place in 2001, and the organisation of the next census has been postponed several times now. The register of residence changes, not to be confused with the usual population registers in other countries, refers to permanent residents and mainly acknowledges changes in registrations from the place of permanent stay (single demographic register administered by the State Migration Service). For many reasons, however, Ukrainians and foreign migrants (except for official expatriates) prefer not to register changes in their actual residential address (Slobodian and Fitisova 2018). This register suggests a very low, albeit positive net migration balance (Figure 1). This result should be treated with caution though as it was acknowledged that in 2018, based on the nationwide survey, as many as 6.8 million residents in Ukraine were not living at their registered domicile (*ibidem*). In turn, the estimates made on the number of border crossings, registered by the State border control separately for Ukrainian nationals and foreigners, suggest that between 2002 and 2018 as many as 6.5 million Ukrainians left and did not return to the country of origin (CES 2018).

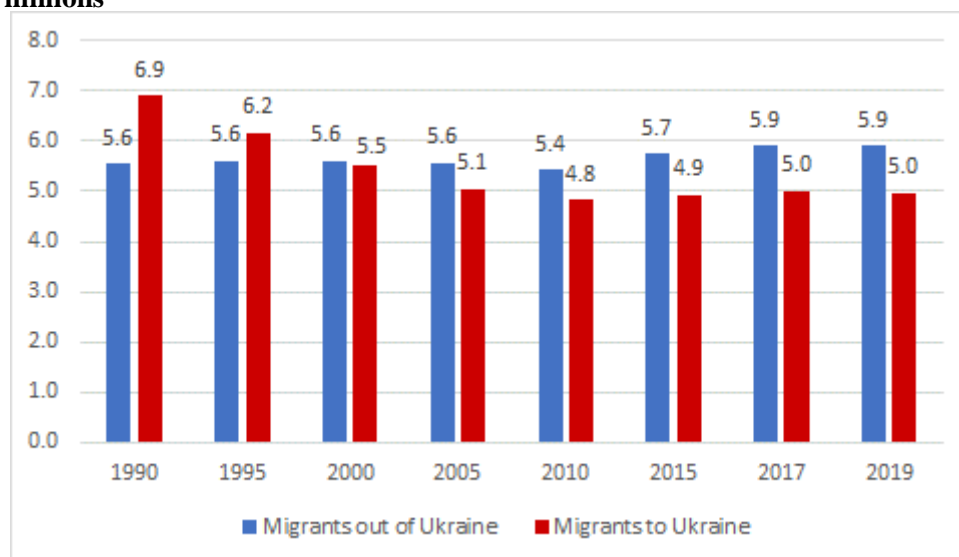**Figure 1. Immigration and emigration based on registration of residence, Ukraine 2002–2019[1]**

[1] For 2014–2019, excluding the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and a part of temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, from April 2016 to September 2017 information on population migration was compiled according to available administrative data received from separate registration bodies.

Source: authors' elaboration based on the State Statistics Service of Ukraine.

The International Organisation for Migration provides up-to-date, internationally comparable estimates of migrant stocks for every country of the world. These data are usually based on population censuses in countries of origin and destination. For several years now Ukraine has been among the top 20 destinations and origins of international migrants, defined as persons residing in a country different than country of birth (foreign-born) (IOM 2020); in 2019, 5.9 million persons born in Ukraine resided outside the country, whereas 5 million foreign-born persons lived in Ukraine (see Figure 2). In the case of Ukraine, however, as in the case of all other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, adopting the criterion of the place of birth in defining a migrant is more than useless. The numbers presented in Figure 2 include mostly internal migrants between the Soviet Union republics who moved before 1991, or persons who repatriated to/from Ukraine in the first years of independence. Three million 'immigrants' living in Ukraine who moved from Russia and another several hundred thousand persons from other former Soviet Union republics, had probably spent long years in Ukraine and had no relevant economic ties with their 'sending' country. In turn, almost 85 per cent of 'emigrants' from Ukraine lived in former USSR countries in the early 1990s. In 27 years, their number decreased from 4.6 to 4.1 million, but the IOM data does not allow to investigate the reasons behind this tendency: while return migration to Ukraine has taken place within this period, gradual extinction of cohorts born long before independence also played an important role.

Figure 2. Stocks of immigrants in Ukraine and emigrants from Ukraine based on the country of birth criterion, in millions

Source: authors' elaboration based on IOM (2020).

Overall, the data on immigration of foreigners is deficient as in the case of data on emigration of Ukrainian nationals. Due to the lack of a recent population census, the only available information concerns the total number and the profiles of legal foreign residents. Annually, Ukraine issues about 20 000 to 25 000 immigration permits to foreigners and stateless persons (DMSU 2019). Thus, in 2019 there were 285 000 foreigners with permanent residence permits (less than 0.7 per cent of the overall population of Ukraine) and approximately 133 000 foreigners with temporary permits (Malynovska 2019). Among them, there were 55 000 students from abroad (in academic year 2018–2019) and 11 000 more completed their education in 2018. In 2018, the number of foreigners officially employed in Ukraine was as low as 16 200 (*ibidem*), and most of them were senior managers or professionals employed in the capital city. These administrative data do not necessarily capture all forms of immigration, such as inflow of temporary character; nonetheless, such a low scale of

official immigration is consistent with the estimates of migrants' personal remittances sent from Ukraine, constituting less than 4 per cent of the value of remittances sent to Ukraine: respectively, US$575 million versus US$15.8 billion at current prices, in 2019 (World Bank 2020b). This evidence suggests the marginal scale of regular foreign inflow to Ukraine, which cannot address labour shortages already identified in the domestic labour market (Czapliński and Dzhaman 2019; OECD 2015; Pieńkowski 2020).

Social surveys in Ukraine

Social surveys provide information on labour emigration, which comprises the greater part of overall emigration from Ukraine. Arguably the most reliable data about emigration is collected through the regular editions of the Ukrainian Labour Force Survey (LFS) and special migration modules attached to the LFS every five years since 2008 (UKRSTAT 2019). The survey is based upon interviews with approximately 40 000 respondents from 20 000 households and is representative for households at the national and regional level. The special migration modules define labour migrants as 15–70 years old nationals who, being still registered at a permanent place of residence in Ukraine, were employed abroad or, while being abroad, searched for a job in the two years preceding the survey. The main shortcoming of the LFS is that it addresses Ukrainian households and their members and tracks temporary migration only, and does not capture permanent emigrants who left Ukraine with all their families and border commuting workers.

Table 1. Ukrainian labour emigrants and population by age cohorts, LFS

	Total, thousands	By age categories, %						
		15–24 years	25–29 years	30–34 years	35–39 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	60–70 years
2015–2017								
Population 15–70	37 614	13.4	9.8	11.7	10.5	19.1	19.2	16.3
Population 15–60[a]	32 537	16.0	11.8	14.0	12.5	22.8	23.0	
All migrants	1 303.3	12.8	14.4	14.1	12	26.3	18.2	2.2
Migrants to Poland	506.5	17.8	18.1	10.5	14.4	24.6	13.8	0.8
2010–2012								
Population 15–70	40 124	16.8	11.5	10.4	9.8	18.5	19.7	13.3
Population 15–60[a]	35 671	19.4	13.3	12.0	11.3	21.3	22.7	
All migrants	1 181.6	11.0	15.8	18.3	13.0	25.3	14.8	1.4
Migrants to Poland	168.4	15.4	10.0	15.0	23.0	23.1	12.1	1.4
2005–2008								
Population 15–70	41 275	19.8	10.5	9.7	9.3	19.4	18.7	12.5
Population 15–60[a]	36 809	22.7	12.0	11.1	10.6	22.1	21.4	
All migrants[b]	1 476.1	15.3	14.2	15.7	14.6	29.3	10.9	
Migrants to Poland	118.1	11.9	10.7	12.4	13.8	37.3	13.9	

[a] Taking into account that the share of migrant aged 60–70 is very small (2.2% in 2015–2017) while it is sizable in population (16%), the comparison of distribution by age cohorts in subsamples of 15–60 years old is more accurate, in our opinion;

[b] Respondents 60 years old and above were included in the survey only since 2012.

Source: compiled by the authors based on the State Statistics Service of Ukraine Statistical Yearbook 2008, 2012, 2017; LFS 2008, 2012, 2017.

Based upon the LFS carried out between January 2005 and May 2008, 1.5 million inhabitants of Ukraine worked abroad at least once (State Statistics Service of Ukraine Statistical Yearbooks 2009, 2013, 2018, Table 1). During January 2010–June 2012 this number fell to 1.2 million, and between January 2015 and June 2017 it went up again to 1.3 million. Thus, the scale of temporary mobility, that is the flow captured by the LFS, became quickly restored following the financial crisis. As compared to the overall population of Ukraine, there is a slight overrepresentation of persons aged 25–29 and 40–49 among migrants (*ibidem*). Interestingly, the share of younger cohorts, aged 15–24, in temporary migration is rather stable, while it substantially decreased between 2005–2008 and 2015–2017 in the general population (see Table 1). It means that the levels of migration in the young cohort increased, and this change is particularly evident for labour migrants going to Poland, for whom the percentage of individuals below 30 years old increased from 25 per cent in 2010–2012 to 36 per cent in 2015–2017 (Table 1). In addition, young migrants are getting more actively involved in educational migration (Stadnyi 2019). Particularly, in 2016–2017 more than 77 000 Ukrainians studied abroad (3 per cent of the total home students). Relative to 2008–2009 the number has grown by 220 per cent and two thirds of this increase can be attributed to study at Polish universities.

Table 2. Ukrainian labour emigrants by duration of stay

	2005–2008	**2010–2012**	**2015–2017**
Temporary migrants, thousands	**1 476.1**	**1 181.6**	**1 303.3**
By duration, %			
up to 1 month	10.4	12.3	13.2
1–3 months	37.2	31.6	43.5
3–6 months	17.6	23.3	22.4
6–12 months	18.6	15.5	10.8
above 12 months	16.2	17.3	10.1
Permanent emigrants, thousands	**530**	**705**	**1 000**
Share of permanent migrants to all (temporary and permanent), %	26.4	37.4	43.4

Source: Pozniak (2012) and IDSS (2018), compiled by the authors based on LFS 2008, 2012, 2017.

At the same time, the share of the oldest migrants in the LFS, particularly 50–59 years old, is growing and resembles their corresponding share in the population. Temporary work abroad has become a permanent employment strategy for the middle-aged cohort of migrants who, as times goes by, move into the older and older age categories. Mobility captured in the LFS special modules conducted in 2008, 2012 and 2017, is of short-term character: most Ukrainian labour migrants were staying less than six months in their host countries (Table 2). This conclusion, however, refers to temporary mobility only and does not account for an important increase in permanent emigration from Ukraine, as estimated by Pozniak (2012) and IDSS (2018). In order to assess the scale of permanent outflow, Pozniak (2012) assumed that durable visits transform into long-term migration and, eventually, into settlement abroad with all the family members. Based on that assumption, Pozniak (2012) used the LFS 2008 data, the age structure of the population and migration intensity by age to assess the number of labour migrants that stayed abroad beyond 3.5 years and were not captured by this wave of the LFS survey. He further assumed that this category of migrants after working abroad for more than five years are likely to permanently settle down in the destination country with their families and, thus, would drop out of the next survey in 2010–2012. The plausibility of these calculations is argued by comparing the resulted estimates to

the numbers reported in destination countries studies. Taking into account the estimated transition parameters similar calculations were performed for LFS 2017 (IDSS 2018). The projected stocks of permanent migrants: approximately 530 thousand persons in 2005–2008, 705 thousand in 2010–2012 and 1 million in 2015–2017, complements the LFS estimates of temporary migrants (Table 2). The total stock estimates for the period of 2015–2017 are as high as 2.7 million migrants of all types: temporary and permanent, of whom 1 million in the last category. The proportion of permanent emigrants visibly increased between 2005–2008 and 2015–2017 and: 37 per cent as compared to 25 per cent.

Longer absence weakens the ties with the home country. In 2017–2018 50 per cent of Ukrainian return migrants from Poland and Italy, interviewed in Ukraine, who had spent at least five years away said that they felt at home in the host countries (Lenoël *et al.* 2019). The demographic profile of Ukrainian migrants varies significantly between destinations, which is to a large extent determined by the main economic sectors of employment. According to the LFS data, the typical Ukrainian labour migrant is a middle-aged, blue-collar worker. These are mostly seasonal migrants performing basic work which does not require any qualification (37 per cent of all migrants) or does not match their qualifications (30 per cent). In Russia, seasonal migrants visiting for 1–3 months comprise the majority and their share has grown from 47 per cent in 2005–2008 to 60 per cent in 2010–2017. Ukrainian migrants going to Italy constitute a completely different group, as 40 per cent of them were staying abroad for over 12 months. These were mostly women (70 per cent) employed in domestic occupations and almost half of them were over 50.

Comparison of Ukrainian LFS with sources in the European destinations

The data derived from the EU member states and reported to Eurostat refer to residence permits, and therefore cover regular migrants, both temporary and permanent, both labour and non-labour. They include persons residing in the destination country at a given point in time that have not acquired the citizenship of the receiving country. They fail to cover irregular migrants as well as individuals with recent migration experience that have returned to Ukraine. As opposed to the Ukrainian data sources, destination countries detect migrants who left Ukraine with all their household members and are no longer captured by the Ukrainian LFS or official statistics of the country of origin. We present here data reported to Eurostat by the EU member states, as well as data published by Rosstat for Russia (Table 3). The main destinations for Ukrainian migrants are Poland and Russia, followed by Italy and Germany. On that basis, the total number of Ukrainian emigrants in all EU member states was estimated at 779 000 in 2012 and 1 177 000 in 2017 (Lücke and Saha 2019). To the latter, Lücke and Saha (*ibidem*) add approximately one third of temporary migrants detected by the Ukrainian LFS and obtain a conservative estimate of 2 million emigrants from Ukraine, that is 7 per cent of the country's working-age population.

Table 3. Estimating the numbers of migrants by data from different surveys

Selected destinations	LFS		Partner country data	
	2012	**2017**	**2012**	**2017**
Russia	510	343	n.a.	346
Poland	169	507	122	451
Italy	156	147	225	235
Czech Republic	152	123	103	116
Germany	28	10	112	118
Portugal	21	21	44	32

Source: Lücke, Saha (2019) based on LFS 2012, 2017, Eurostat.

Administrative data from destination countries rather suggest the plausibility of LFS estimates concerning the stocks of Ukrainian emigrants. In 2017, the migrant stocks for Russia, Poland and Czechia were similar, but large discrepancies between two destinations could be observed for Germany and Italy. In these two countries, Ukrainian migration was of more long-term character and migrants were more likely to acquire permanent status.

Tendencies derived from the most recent studies concerning Ukrainian migrants in the destination countries confirm the finding of Ukrainian surveys. Particularly, Górny, Madej and Porwit (2020) indicate that the mean duration of stay among Ukrainian workers in Poland is rising. They also show that the motivations of Ukrainian labour migrants evolve: the main reason for migration is no longer lack of work in the country of origin, but rather low wages. In addition to a growing proportion of the youngest adults, this may indicate that migration strategies become more diversified, and that some migrants aim at benefitting from financial opportunities in the destination, rather than at moving back-and-forth between the two countries.

Main conclusions from the quantitative data

Results on the dynamics of the scale and the temporary nature of Ukrainian migration may be summarised as follows. The data based on the Ukrainian administrative register of changes of residence suggest that the inflow to Ukraine exceeds the outflow, but this source of information is not trustworthy in reflecting the overall international mobility to and from Ukraine, as it does not capture the main part of migratory moves, that is, short-term mobility, and does not include mobility that does not involve official change of residence status. Based on the country of birth criterion, IOM (2020) records an increasing stock of emigrants and stagnating stock of immigrants, but this relates in the first place to previous internal mobility within the Soviet Union or repatriation in the first years after 1991. As for temporary migration, three LFS surveys show an intense outflow of both short- and long-term character, a rise in the level of emigration in the last decade, and this matches the statistics of the major receiving countries. Studies in the main countries of destination point at a growing proportion of long-term migrants, which reveals a tendency for settlement strategies, and of young migrants, aged under 30, which refers mostly to students who also tend to settle down in the host countries. At the same time the official inflow of foreigners remains marginal relative to the population of Ukraine. In what follows we try to interpret these conclusions in a broader perspective referring both to theoretical considerations on international mobility and other CEE countries' experiences.

Discussion: Will trends intensify or reverse?

In line with neo-classical economic theory, the economic incentives, especially the expected advantages from labour migration explain the high levels of mobility which for thousands of Ukrainian nationals became a response to the hardships of the post-Soviet transition. They include such economic push factors as large discrepancies in wage levels between Ukraine and the vast majority of other European, including CEE countries, especially when juxtaposed with the growing difficulties in the labour market and the collapse of the welfare state system at home. In the 1990s, with the requirement of a 3-month Schengen visa abolished only in 2001 and only for those CEE countries that became the EU members soon afterwards, institutional barriers maintained by the west European destinations hindered emigration on a permanent basis (Bruecker *et al*. 2009; Okólski 2000). In these circumstances, the pioneers of labour migration from Ukraine made use of previously established, mostly informal international contacts (such as family ties), and headed to Czechia, Poland and former republics of the Soviet Union: Belarus, Russia and the Baltic States. In Ukraine in the late 1990s, temporary labour migration and border commuting for petty trade intensified, giving rise to durable migration

networks that have been extending their scope to larger and larger categories of Ukrainian society (Fonseca *et al*. 2014; Hosnedlova and Stanek 2014; Vianello 2016). In a household perspective, temporary migration enhanced by social networks enabled a strategy of diversifying income sources and of reducing the risks related to employment whenever the other, not mobile family members remained professionally active in the country of origin (Kindler 2011).

The policies of main destination countries towards the inflow of labour migrants from Ukraine, including Poland's simplified procedure for short-term labour migrants established in 2006, 'channelled' Ukrainian nationals into temporary mobility (Górny and Kindler 2016). With the gradual abolition of institutional barriers in Poland and in the EU as a whole, mobility from Ukraine intensified to specific regions and economic sectors in the countries of destination (Górny and Kaczmarczyk 2018). In this sense, studies based on the social capital concept explain the spatial directions and economic allocation of the labour outflows from Ukraine, taking place in a particular plexus of strong economic incentives and rather unfavourable institutional circumstances. But what is seldom stressed, Ukrainian migration networks also provided a reservoir of temporary, flexible and, therefore, cheap workforce to the most developed countries, and fuelled the so-called secondary segment of the labour market characterised by low wages, little employment security and difficult working conditions (Leontiyeva 2016; Vianello 2016). The existence of a *quasi*-permanent demand for immigrant labour in the domestic services (Italy and Poland), trade (Czechia and Poland), construction sector (Czechia, Poland and Russia) and agriculture (Poland) perfectly corresponded to the readiness of Ukrainian nationals to undertake short-term mobility.

But with further regulations concerning international mobility and settlement being gradually lifted in several European countries, to quote only several regularisations of irregular foreign workers carried out in Italy, the Eastern Partnership introduced in Czechia, Hungary and Poland, and with labour shortages in other CEE countries, a growing number of Ukrainian migrants started to settle down in their destinations, such as Czechia, Italy and Poland (Leontiyeva 2016). While some migrants maintained the 'back-and-forth' mobility between temporary employment abroad and family life in Ukraine, others efficiently adapted to host societies and labour markets (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Brzozowska 2017). As some surveys in destination countries show, the duration of short-term migration gradually extends.

This increasing share of migrants undertaking long-term emigration raises questions about the possibility of Ukraine's turn in the migration regime, as observed in other CEE countries. According to migration transition theory, as European countries experienced different dynamics during the demographic transition – first, high natural increase and second, negative natural balance and population ageing – the migration balance switches as well from net sending (that is, outflow exceeds inflow) to net receiving (*vice versa*) (Chesnais 1986, 1992). This turning point was observed in the countries of western Europe in the early 1960s or the 1970s, and later in the southern part of the continent (Okólski 2012). In CEE, an increasing number of these countries – Czechia and Hungary in the early 2000s, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia in the 2010s – have become migration destinations for substantial numbers of foreigners, which suggests a radical and most probably persistent change in these countries' migration regimes.

One could pose a question about decisive factors underlying such a switch in migration regimes in CEE countries. According to Chesnais (1986), the migration transition in Western European countries was strictly related to demographic dynamics: a large natural increase resulting from demographic transition prompted mass emigration at the end of the 19th and first half of the 20th century (thus, net sending regime), whereas low or negative natural increase and population ageing have been underlying labour immigration (net receiving regime) since the second half of the 20th century. Other authors pointed at other accompanying factors, mostly growing deficits in the native labour force (Bonifazi 2008; Frey and Mammey 1996; Salt, Singleton and Hogarth 1994), segmentation of labour markets and unsatisfied demand for low-skilled workers (Van Mol and de

Valk 2016). In the CEE region, however, demographic indicators did not correspond accurately to the claims of migration transition theory: large emigration from such countries as the Baltic States, Poland and Romania was observed in a period of low fertility, zero natural increase and acceleration of population ageing. This emigration, replacing the preceding mainly temporary mobility, was related to lifting of migration restrictions, mostly after the EU enlargement eastwards (Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski 2009), rather than demographic factors.

Like other countries of the CEE region, the outflow from Ukraine occurs in demographic conditions of low dynamics and an advanced population ageing, reinforced by low fertility and the outflow of young adults. After the decades of intense temporary labour mobility, the permanent form of outflow seems to slowly take over and the softening of the institutional barriers in the destination countries intensifies this transformation. Is the Ukrainian emigration of the last three decades the eventual outflow relieving the disequilibrium in the labour market and constituting grounds for inflow of foreigners? Even despite most recent improvements in GDP and unemployment rate and growing labour shortages, Ukraine's economic situation is still critical and by no means compares to other CEE countries that attract foreign labour including, what is relevant for this study, Ukrainian workers. The labour shortages in Ukraine increase in specific economic sectors, but are not addressed by any active labour market policy of the authorities that could foster immigration. For instance, foreign students have limited opportunities to enter the Ukrainian labour market (Zhurakovska 2019), are not allowed to work legally during their studies, and must return to their home countries after graduation. The State Migration Strategy 2018–2025 (KMU 2017) recognises Ukraine's low attractiveness to immigrants, but intended actions are insufficient to mitigate labour shortages. The Strategy (*ibidem*) and the Implementation Plan (KMU 2018) request various state institutions 'to simplify the employment of foreigners' and 'to synchronise labour market demand and immigration policy' which can be interpreted rather broadly. They also recommended exploring in 2019 'the need to extend foreign students' stay after graduation' – which was not done, which raises doubts about political determination of promoting the settlement of foreign graduates.

As in all European countries, the Covid-19 pandemic has limited the opportunities for foreigners to move to Ukraine. While this last factor should be treated rather as a short-term shock to international mobility overall in Europe, the lack of systematic measures actively enhancing the inflow of foreigners constitutes the most important impediment for Ukraine in the transition to net receiving status. In other CEE countries undergoing such a transition, for instance Czechia and Poland, the recent population ageing and economic development were accompanied by active labour market policies establishing, among other things, simplified employment procedures in sectors with labour shortages. This resulted in a large inflow of foreign labour. Ukraine, undergoing similar demographic changes and starting to register an increase in GDP, still lacks an expansive migration policy that would not only enhance returns or inflow of foreigners, but more importantly, help to reduce labour shortages and promote economic development.

Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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