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Editorial

We are delighted to present our readers with this distinctive, extended issue of the *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* (CEEMR), which marks the 10th anniversary of our journal. The anniversary prompts us to reflect on what we have done and what the ways forward may be. During this first decade since our journal's creation, we have published 197 papers written by 257 authors – 65 per cent of whom were female researchers – based in 33 countries (the top five being Poland, the UK, Norway, Romania and the Netherlands) and assessed by 262 reviewers, supported by 26 journal editors and 25 members of the advisory board – to all of whom we owe an enormous debt of gratitude.

The significance of our authors' contributions and the journal quality were recognised in numerous international databases, including the ESCI Web of Science Core Collection (from 2020), Scopus and EBSCO (2021). Published in July this year, our first Impact Factor of the Web of Science database – 1.7 – shows the CEEMR's importance and influence, which has been confirmed by the citation index CiteScore in Scopus 2.1, placing us in the second quartile of the best journals in the disciplines of 'Social Sciences', 'Demography' and 'Sociology and Political Sciences' and meaning that we are in the group of 30+ per cent of the best outlets in this database.

The mission of the CEEMR, inspired by Prof. Marek Okolski, at that time Head of the Centre of Migration Research at the University of Warsaw and its first editor-in-chief, Prof. Agata Gorny, remains to encourage and enable an academic discussion on texts and research related to migration into and within Central and Eastern Europe and to promote studies concerning this region and migrants from CEE. Our ambition is not only to show the specificity of migration processes concerning CEE but also to bring wider theoretical and methodological contributions to migration studies and to participate in current debates.

The distinctive combination of features – such as originality, significance, high quality and rigour, interdisciplinarity, diversity, openness and inclusiveness – builds our identity. Operating on the principle of the Diamond Open Access (with no fees for publication for authors and entirely free access for all readers), the CEEMR provides a platform for exchange and discussion between researchers from different backgrounds and parts of the world (*inter alia*, supporting young scholars and authors from less-internationalised environments), gives inclusive access to publishing opportunities for researchers and free knowledge for readers (including those from outside academia). Our publication model is possible thanks to the stable core funding secured by the publishers – the Centre of Migration Research, the University of Warsaw, and the Polish Academy of Science. This is supplemented by internal and external grants for development as well as the fantastic work of a dedicated team of people editing, producing and promoting the journal (to mention only two of them pivotal for these processes, Renata Stefanska – CEEMR managing editor – and Jenny Money, our editing mentor and proofreader). We believe it is crucial to enable inclusiveness and open science and to stimulate broad knowledge generating and sharing to fulfil the university's civic mission.

With migration scholars' focus of attention moving to CEE countries due to the war in Ukraine, increasing migration and integration pressures and the growing presence of migration topics in public and political discourses in this region, our journal provides timely and specialist knowledge. It gives local researchers and individuals with lived experiences a voice with which to share their perspectives and insights within and beyond CEE. Despite the occasional additional effort and resources needed to produce a high-quality output, we are committed to providing authors with visible original, significant and high-standard research findings with our publishing forum and support throughout the manuscript revising and publishing process.

Due to political, social, cultural and conceptual changes and our aim to give a broader platform for knowledge exchange and discussion, we believe that the CEEMR's geographical scope needs to be seen

beyond the narrow post-communist lens. We draw on historical, geographical, social and cultural links and common elements leading to the understandings of Central Europe, which include countries such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and even Slovenia or Croatia. Moving beyond the binary division of Western vs post-communist Europe allows new perspectives and narratives to be articulated and helps to challenge and change power relations in migration studies – thus contributing to the decolonisation of knowledge.

This extended volume of the CEEMR contains two important special sections. One section is intended to provide new approaches to integration and discuss this increasingly debated concept, while the other constitutes the first part of the collection of papers submitted for our call on the migration implications and consequences of the war in Ukraine. These special sections are followed by three individual articles on distrust and hope among Georgian migrant women in Greece, on foreign residents' perceptions of public services in Poland and on the experiences of Polish professionals in Silicon Valley in the USA. The issue closes with an article on population ageing during migration transition, published in our special series 'Migration Processes and Policies in Central and Eastern European Countries'.

Aleksandra Grzymała-Kazłowska
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— SPECIAL SECTION ONE —

Beyond Integration: A Re-Evaluation of Migrant and Host Society Relations

Doga Atalay*, Umut Korkut*, Marcus Nicolson**, Peter Scholten***, Maggie Laidlaw*

This CEEMR special section examines encounters and interactions between migrants as newcomers and their hosts. Our exploration derives from harnessing, first, a sense of belonging and, second, social interactions as two interrelated processes of encounter. To the extent that the host develops a sense of belonging with the newcomers and cultivates social interaction with them as the others, the newcomers would become visible and encounters followed by meaningful interactions with them would be possible. To look at this from another perspective, the newcomers develop a sense of belonging with their hosts as they encounter them and engage in social interactions with them in their everyday. We note that there is ample research that takes a critical stance on integration and inclusion already but there is still space to explore encounters and interactions in greater detail and why they matter for newcomers and host societies to establish intimacies with each other.

Keywords: migration, integration, narratives, nationalism, social inclusion

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Introduction

This CEEMR special section examines encounters and interactions between migrants as newcomers and their hosts. Our exploration derives from harnessing, first, a sense of belonging and, second, social interactions as two interrelated processes of encounter. To the extent that the host develops a sense of belonging with the newcomers and cultivates social interaction with them as the others, the newcomers would become visible and encounters followed by meaningful interactions with them would be possible. To look at this from another perspective, the newcomers develop a sense of belonging with their hosts as they encounter them and engage in social interactions with them in their everyday. We note that there is ample research that takes a critical stance on integration and inclusion already but there is still space to explore encounters and interactions in greater detail and why they matter for newcomers and host societies to establish intimacies with each other.

Within our criticism of existing integration research, we harness the contribution that encounter-and-interaction-focused research could make to enable a deeper understanding of the sense of belonging and social intimacies that it can involve. Therefore, we foreground the everyday experiences of migrants and the significance of the narratives that these experiences produce when migrants and their hosts encounter and interact with each other. We first focus on the interaction between macro narratives of nationalism and integration and, second, micro and lived experiences of migrants' lives to illustrate migration stories. In the end, we look beyond the existing discussion around indicator-induced integration research and practice. We contend that social inclusion processes can become a lot more complex when we propose a deeper elaboration on micro processes while keeping an eye on the importance of macro politics, narratives and specific discourses. We also note that the existing research underlines the importance of interactions between migrants and the host society. Yet, it does not reflect on, first, the essence and forms of such interactions and, second, on how people interact.

In a nutshell, therefore, our special section proposes the following. The primary encounter between migrants as newcomers and wider society as their host takes place through their expressing their self-narratives to each other in everyday situations. Along with their verbal component, self-narratives can also relate to how we carry and present ourselves to wider society.

We have selected five papers as well as an introduction and a conclusion. The discussion paper is a creative effort to involve a live discussion and reflection on the theme and studies of integration in this special section. It brings together Adrian Favell, Kesi Mahendran, Jenny Phillimore, and Jon Fox as established scholars and critiques of policy and research in the integration field in discussion with each other while queried by Peter Scholten.

Special section overview

This special section examines the concept of integration for migrant groups across Europe and beyond. Our exploration derives from our critical stance on (1) sense of belonging and spaces of encounter, (2) place-making and inclusion initiatives, (3) negotiated identities and informal migration processes and, finally, (4) integration policy, practice and critiques. We develop this discussion over five articles, including a discussion with Adrian Favell, Jon Fox, Jenny Phillimore and Kesi Mahendran on their reflections of migration and integration studies. The special section brings together a fascinating array of studies covering the UK, Germany, Cyprus, Croatia, Italy, Austria, Malta, Slovenia, the Netherlands and the US. Our research covers both urban, rural and peri-urban spaces. We achieve this by bringing together a strong body of authorship comprising both junior and senior academics.

Moving on from such empirical breadth and conceptual richness, we are critical of existing integration research and, instead, adopt multiple new perspectives to investigate the value that everyday narratives possess.

While we are criticising the theory of integration, therefore, we are supporting our approach through foregrounding the everyday experiences of migrants and the significance of narratives in social inclusion processes. We also focus on micro-level social interactions and the discourse and policies that influence them. In this manner, we seek to deepen our understanding of migrant trajectories in their new host society.

Much of the integration literature has highlighted the importance of social interactions between migrants and the host society (Ager and Strang 2004, 2008; Phillimore 2012, 2020). However, the existing literature is not specifically dealing with *how* migrant individuals are interacting with host society members nor *why* these interactions need to take place. Furthermore, the existing integration literature often overlooks *where* migrant–host social interactions may emerge and under *what* circumstances. These unanswered questions are the gaps in the integration literature that this special section elaborates on and addresses.

What is its theoretical/conceptual framework?

This special section builds on a theoretical interpretation of migrant social inclusion as a micro-level process. In so doing, we foreground the importance of everyday narratives and micro interactions to foster social inclusion. The articles in the special section draw from a wide range of theoretical standpoints, which illuminate our understanding of social inclusion. In particular, we evaluate the roles of self-narratives and how these affect peoples' engagements with the *other* in everyday relationships. The articles harness the small stories (Bamberg 2004) of individual migrants and their reflection on mundane everyday interactions.

Our authors deal with these theoretical issues in a plethora of ways such as the importance of 'light' connections and relationships in lived spaces (Peterson); the accumulation of diverse experiences (Peristianis); the offering of free labour to practice good citizenship (Harper); and the roles that NGOs play in migrant reception and protection (Korkut and Fazekas). Moreover, the special section concludes with a critical discussion of integration with some of the key theorists in the field.

How it builds on the state of the art and goes beyond this

The main critiques on immigrant integration have only become manifest during the 2010s (Anderson 2010; de Genova 2010). This research has criticised the fundamental principles of integration (Dahinden 2016; Favell 2019; Klarenbeek 2021; Schinkel 2018) while indicator-induced integration (III) remains an aspiration for policymakers. However, in this special section we argue that integration cannot be measured through such indicators. The authors within this special section contend that integration is not a measurable process. Rather, we turn to inclusion as a more accurate term of reference and use social inclusion throughout the special section in order to explore those migrant narratives which mirror their interactions with the host society (Phillimore 2012).

In our exploration of the everyday and informal essence of integration, we refer to a myriad of place-making and inclusion initiatives informed by volunteering (Reeger, Carla, Mattes, Lehner, Flarer and Psenner).

Integration as a notion moved away from assessing immigrant integration from fitting into national models towards civic integration processes (Joppke and Morawska 2003). Integration approaches are prone to imply that the host society would have a superior position over migrants, organising integration as 'the inclusion [of individuals] in an already existing social system' (Penninx 2019: 3) or integration as 'a generations-lasting process of inclusion and *acceptance of migrants* in the core institutions, relations and statuses of the receiving society' (Heckmann 2006: 18).

However, our volume argues that integration is also a two-way process concerning the host society. Social interaction between migrants and host society members do matter (Ager and Strang 2008, 2010; Penninx 2019;

Phillimore 2012, 2020). In this special section, we explore how newcomers and their hosts interact with each other and the narratives that they generate amidst their interactions. In particular, we examine how mundane spaces, including sports and arts settings, work as environments of encounter and can facilitate these interactions. We also consider volunteering activities as an everyday mechanism through which migrant individuals and the host society can collect and share their experiences. This spatial element helps us to operationalise our theoretical approach to integration in everyday environments.

What are the key issues it addresses?

The integration of migrants matters but we hardly understand what integration entails. Neither policymakers nor integration scholars pay much attention to how the public, involving the host and the newcomers, experience integration. This special section focuses on processes of social inclusion and migration, involving topics such as a sense of belonging and social interactions, arts and sports encounters and informal interactions, negotiated identities and migration narratives, integration practice and critiques. Social inclusion is an everyday phenomenon that relates to the course of one's life in the new host country. We propose that we need to understand the narratives that this process involves and the intimacies that it generates.

What are its objectives and how these will be achieved?

Our objective is to re-imagine the concept of integration and further critical research in the field of migration studies. In particular, we believe that revisiting micro-level interactions can deepen our understanding of social inclusion processes for migrants. This special section builds on the strengths of both established and early-career scholars to re-examine integration from multiple perspectives. In particular, our special section addresses the following questions:

- *How* do migrant individuals interact with host society members?
- *Why* do these interactions need to take place?
- *Where* do migrant–host social interactions appear?
- Under *what* circumstances?
- How does discourse and policy shape migrants' everyday lived experiences?

The key societal question that this special section addresses is the integration of migrant individuals in host societies across Europe and beyond. Much of the debate on integration has focused on evaluable indicators, such as employment, housing, language acquisition and income. However, policy and indicator-orientated research is not confronting the everyday challenges that migrants face in the host country. We see these challenges expressed only if we pay attention to emerging narratives. The existing migrant integration literature often overlooks the importance of micro-level processes and encounters. The relevance of micro-level social interactions has been foregrounded in the wake of increased migration to Europe since 2015 (Pisarevskaya, Levy, Scholten and Jansen 2019).

Firstly, we examine how individual migrants negotiate their own identities and the influence of migration narratives on their everyday experiences (Peristianis; Korkut and Fazekas). These identity negotiation processes are often informed by how the wider society perceives them as well as the most prevalent political discourse and narratives. Understanding identity formation processes is an important pre-requisite before examining everyday interactions.

In light of the findings from above, we endeavour to make sense of the essence of migrant and host-society interactions through investigating narratives, sense of belonging and social interactions (see, among others, Peterson). We pay particular attention to everyday, mundane events and their effects on processes of belonging.

We also look at how disruptive interactions are affecting the self-narratives of migrant individuals. This can lead to the creation of counter-narratives or the upholding of master, national narratives of inclusion.

In order to understand the potential for spaces of interactions – including sports, arts and volunteering spaces – to facilitate informal interactions, we use specific case studies (see, among others, (Reeger, Carla, Mattes, Lehner, Flarer and Psenner). These case studies build upon examples of local integration programmes from across Europe and beyond. We also look at the potential of art and sports programmes to develop intimate relationships across migrant and host-society groups. We position these as examples of social interaction between these two groups.

The discussion section of the special section deals with integration practice and critiques. This includes a discussion on perspectives on integration by a number of leading scholars in the field (Jenny Phillimore, Adrian Favell, Peter Scholten, Kesi Mahendran and Jon Fox). This concludes our special section.

Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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The Ruptures and Continuities in Hungary's Reception Policy: The Ukrainian Refugee Crisis

Umut Korkut*, Roland Fazekas*

This article reflects on the role that Hungary has played with respect to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. It elaborates on two issues. The first is Hungary's relatively amicable relationship with Russia and how the Hungarian political elite has approached the Ukrainian crisis in view of its domestic political goals. The second is the migration policy that Hungary adopted when faced with the arrival of irregular Middle Eastern refugees and the mitigations in this policy to respond to the Ukrainian arrivals. The paper discusses the evolution in the governance of migration in Hungary and the actors and the politics underpinning the Hungarian reception policy from the perspective of these two issues. In this context, it draws on the literature on leadership and how the latter affects political contexts and social realities, particularly with respect to migration politics.

Keywords: migration, refugee crisis, Russian aggression, Ukraine, reception policies, Hungary

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Introduction

Europe faced another refugee crisis in 2022, soon after the one trigged by wars in the Middle East in 2015. Once again, the crisis was caused by a war – but one that is on Europe's doorstep. It is therefore closer to and taking place in what Europeans have long felt to be their 'extended self' rather than their 'other'. The war in Ukraine, which started after Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022, has seen millions of Ukrainians and third-country nationals (TCNs) cross into countries to the west and south of Ukraine, including Turkey. Due to the complexity of classifying the population, we use both the terms 'Ukrainian refugees' and 'refugees from Ukraine' interchangeably throughout this article. Hungary was one of the receiving countries; notably before the war Ukraine had a sizable minority of Hungarian speakers and ethnics in its western provinces. Beyond presumably feeling the need to protect a sizable Hungarian ethnic minority in Ukraine, however, what makes Hungary an interesting case study for the reception of refugees is its legacy of the security-oriented and exclusivist tone of migration politics – at times putting it at odds and in legal battles with the European Union. A further notable issue that makes it singular is Hungary's difficult relationship with Ukraine since the latter's first transition to democracy in 2014 and its problematic relationship with Russia since then. Unlike other countries in the region, Hungary has had normal, if not exactly friendly, relations with Russia that have also evolved into energy partnerships alongside bilateral trade expansion during the subsequent Fidesz governments since 2010. The war in Ukraine played a major role in helping Fidesz to win a fourth parliamentary election in 2022 due to the scaremongering by the state media about how Hungary would join the Russian-Ukrainian war, if the opposition won the election, by sending troops and weapons to the frontline (Híradó.hu 2022). Even though the opposition coalition stated many times that these claims were complete fabrications, the Fidesz media conglomerate bombarded the population with more and more claims about the opposition's (unspecified but suspicious) secret deals with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky (Scheppele 2022).

Considering the above, it becomes crucial to follow refugee politics and the formulation of reception policies in Hungary amidst the war in Ukraine. Inevitably this also relates to wider debates on the securitisation and politicisation of migration politics and, in this regard, our paper starts with a short reflection of such concepts in view of how they can relate to humanitarianism. We then shift our focus to the history of Ukrainian migration to Hungary. We also reflect on the relations between Ukraine and Hungary in view of the Hungarian ethnic minority in the country and the fact of Hungary having had an amicable relationship with Russia. After a summary of this background, we discuss the mitigations in Hungarian reception policy in view of the Ukrainian refugee crisis.

Hungary is a crucial case through which to study continuities and ruptures in migration policies. The Hungarian reception policy has received much attention since the summer of 2015 (Gyollai and Korkut 2020), especially concerning the protection and reception conditions for refugees in the country – not to mention the lack of support for their integration. What emerged as the governance of migration in that period was a highly securitised, legalised and controlling framework that sought to banish refugees from arriving in Hungary and to punish the NGOs working to assist in their protection, reception and integration. In view of this legacy and to assess the current mitigations of the Hungarian reception policy, we are interested in evaluating the governance of the Ukrainian refugee reception in Hungary, tracing the political narrative in effect and the actors involved. We thus foreground the racial bias in Hungarian reception policy while noting the shift in Hungarian governance practices from securisation during the Middle Eastern refugee crisis to the rather hands-off attitude of the Hungarian government in the face of the Ukrainian refugee crisis. In discussing this, we first look at the political and media narratives that surrounded both migration crises and at the roles of the respective actors of migration governance, considering the formal and informal functions that they have taken on.

The securitisation of an issue is always socially constructed in that its different influencers play a role in its construction at different levels, including the media, political elites or security professionals (Bigo 2002; Hampshire 2011; Tsoukala 2011). Securitisation discourses can wage a direct impact on the way in which polities and the public treat migrants. While elites construct discourses, discourses also speak through us – through our human agency – and thus privilege and shape certain ways of apprehending the world. A discursive frame could then become a deeply structured symbolic apparatus that we use to make sense of the world (Korkut and Eslen-Ziya 2017). According to Mumby and Clair (1997: 202), 'this frame provides the fundamental categories in which thinking [regarding socio-political challenges] can take place. [Frames] establish the limits of discussion and define the range of problems that can be addressed'. Securitisation narratives also unfold in a certain historical, social and political context, which the politicians can affect, inescapably determining the comprehension and interpretation (van Dijk 2008) of what external migration, in this instance, implies for the public. When securitisation narrative meets humanitarianism, however, a subsequent recontextualisation of humanitarianism for the self – but not for the other – legitimises strategies of migration control and exclusion. Furthermore, a reconceptualisation of human rights as the rights of citizens and of Christianity as a constituent of national/European identity – and *vis-à-vis* the migrant other – abate humanitarianism and constrain its universal essence. Korkut, Terlizzi and Gyollai (2020) earlier showed how humanitarian rhetoric, albeit with an interpretation limited to protecting the self against the other, can be used to justify and legitimise the implementation of security measures. This would imply humanitarianism and securitisation as not necessarily representing two distinct logics but could also be conceived as a condition for humanitarianism if a streamlined common logic were adopted (Little and Vaughan-Williams 2017; Stepka 2018; Watson 2011). In this respect, it becomes crucial to assess Hungarian reception policies during the war in Ukraine and the refugee crisis after 2015 that involved people coming from the Middle East.

An overview of Hungarian minorities in Ukraine and the relationship of the neighbouring states to Hungary

As two neighbouring post-communist countries, Ukraine and Hungary have had a history of cross-border movements. There is a historical kinship between the Western regions of Ukraine, particularly within the area of Transcarpathia, where many ethnic Hungarian-speakers live. This dates back to the aftermath of the First World War, when Hungary lost two-thirds of its former territory and its inhabitants. The Treaty of Trianon is one of the darkest chapters of Hungarian history and still constitutes a great tragedy for the country considering the substantial economic, political and social changes that it brought on the life of the nation (Romsics 2007), notwithstanding the feelings of injustice and the grievances widely shared among the Hungarian people. To this day, Trianon still resonates in Hungary and plays an essential role in the formation of Hungarian national identity and politics around it (Putz 2019).

While, during the communist era in Hungary, Trianon was strictly off the agenda and ethnic Hungarians, torn away from the motherland and living in its neighbouring countries, were quietly ignored (Schöpflin 2022) the Fidesz government has managed to reconnect the Hungarian nation with its long-rooted grief with the Trianon Treaty by promoting 4 June as the Day of National Belonging. Since Fidesz gained a two-thirds majority in the 2010 parliamentary election, it extended voting rights to Hungarian ethnics in neighbouring countries by making them citizens. This has also largely contributed to its second consecutive electoral victory in 2014, as the Hungarian ethnic vote became an indispensable advantage for the government. The nationalist Fidesz party also promoted the togetherness of Hungarians in neighbouring countries, including the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine where an estimated 140,000 Hungarians live (Brzozowski 2019).

Indeed, the historical kinship between Hungarians and the ethnic Hungarian speakers living in Ukraine took on a new character after Hungary joined the EU in 2004 and the Schengen area in 2008. To achieve a link between Hungary and Hungarian minorities in its neighbouring states has been a political objective for Fidesz governments over a number of years (Scott 2018: 25). The Schengen-area accession of Hungary in 2007, alongside Slovakia and Slovenia – where many Hungarian ethnics live – has partially fulfilled this objective. Furthermore, the EU accession of Romania in 2007 and Croatia in 2013 and the removal of Schengen visa obligations for the citizens of Serbia and Ukraine respectively in 2009 and 2017 allowed Hungary to achieve a free-travel zone in its neighbourhood for its kin. The Fidesz government welcomed these developments, though it maintained a strict position on the need to have borders for other countries in Europe. The then-State Secretary for Parliamentary and Strategic Affairs, Bálazs Orbán, indicated that '[the Hungarians] do not like borders because it has separated them from one and other but not because (…) others from us' (Orbán 2015: 17). This sheds light on the key migratory developments in Hungary, particularly after the end of 2014, as it coincided with various refugee crises triggered by the political turmoil in the Middle East. In this period, Viktor Orbán's Fidesz government exploited borders both 'physically and symbolically in ways that resonate with fear of migrants and conservative scepticism of multiculturalism and open borders', while praising the enlargement of the Schengen area and the visa liberalisation between Ukraine and Hungary (Scott 2018: 26). Since joining the EU in 2004, we have seen, in parallel, Hungary's search for cross-border cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe alongside a 'policy of border securitization, which essentially entailed a re-nationalisation of its border regime and its framing of the political border as a protective barrier against threats to national and European identity' (Lamour and Varga 2017 cited in Gyollai and Korkut 2020: 11; Scott 2018: 19).

Amidst the nation-building process in Ukraine after 2014, the language question of ethnic minorities in Ukraine caused a stir in Hungary. The Fidesz government, in reaction to Ukraine's 2017 laws that limited the rights of ethnic minorities, attempted to block the country's NATO and EU rapprochement process. Hungary justified its intervention by stating that the new law – which was widely criticised (Denber 2015) as it restricted the right of minorities to use their mother tongue in education – did not meet Western and European standards. The Fidesz narrative was later exploited by propaganda channels in Russia and by many disinformation portals, stating that the Kiev administration discriminated against minorities and was used to raise support in Russia against Ukraine by building a base for the current war as well as the war back in 2014 (Takácsy and Szicherle 2020).

The war in Ukraine became a central element of the campaign in the 2022 general election in Hungary. The Hungarian government's communication strategy mostly consisted of a plan to stay out of the Russian-Ukrainian war so that they could portray themselves as the protectors of the Hungarian nation and families to their electorate. The government did not condemn the Russian aggression extensively but stressed that Hungary should retain a good business relationship with Putin's Russia in order to maintain affordable energy prices. A section of the Fidesz-controlled media even challenged the legitimacy of the Ukrainian government and mostly sided with Russia, condemning the conflict as a war provoked by the US and Ukraine. The role that Zelensky has played in this regard became highly politicised, while the Fidesz media appended its pre-existing anti-EU and anti-elite narratives to Zelensky's political personality. Furthermore, the media remained silent on the fact that the Hungarian government has been building close relationships with Russia and justified this with Hungary's quest to 'protect the Hungarian families, conservative values and the energy price caps' (Bákonyi 2022). While most of the broadcasts on the war covered neutral footage, the undertone is usually anti-Ukraine (Keller-Alánt 2022).

The war in Ukraine also turned out to be considerably profitable for the Fidesz government. Amidst the instability in neighbouring countries, the government showcased Hungary as a beacon of stability despite the world-wide pandemic, the ongoing war and the continuously rising inflation. The Fidesz government also

pursued a narrative that 'Hungary must remain neutral in this war' – while producing continuous smear campaigns against the opposition by stating falsely that 'if the left-wing opposition wins, war between Russia and Hungary will start on the following day of the election' (ORIGO.hu 2022). However, in the end, their tactical portrayal of Hungary's neutrality resulted in an overwhelming victory for Fidesz, with a renewed supermajority within the Hungarian parliament during the 2022 national elections (Taylor 2022); Hungary did not support most of the EU sanctions and tried to veto the developments to constrain Russia via economic regulations (Herszenhorn, Barigazzi and Moens 2022). The Fidesz party's communication emphasises that they must also protect the Hungarian people and families from Brussels, the US and Ukraine from rising energy prices. Interestingly, the list of 'enemies' this time does not contain migrants fleeing conflict, although xenophobia has been the flagship of all polarising Fidesz narratives in the past decade (Pepinsky, Reiff and Szabo 2022). In view of this political setting, we are looking, here, at how the war in Ukraine mitigated Hungary's reception policy by making it diverge acutely from its securitised racist undertones to its novel informal and hands-off reformulations. We argue that, while becoming less formalised, institutionalised and exclusivist, it is still *ad hoc* and determined by the domestic political priorities of the Fidesz rather than adopting a humanitarian scope that would follow a fully-fledged formal set of reception policies. In view of this, Orbán's political aims and narrative determine the course of Hungarian reception policy despite its more liberal scope towards the Ukrainians.

Methods, data collection and conceptualisation of research questions

This article uses Viktor Orbán's speeches regarding external migration and Europe after 2014, as that was the year when migration gained much relevance in Hungarian politics and reached its climax as a political issue as from 2015. This was due to the increasing irregular arrivals of migrants to Hungary, particularly from the Middle East and beyond, starting in mid-2015. Furthermore, in view of its external migration and the future of Europeanisation, Viktor Orbán's voice has gained traction not only in Hungary but also in the rest of the European Union (Josipovic *et al*. 2022 NOT IN REFS). The speeches sampled for this paper derive from 25 major speeches that Orbán gave on the issue of migration and Europe between 2016 and 2019. Hence, we present an overview of the most dominant themes in these speeches. While we could analyse the speeches of Viktor Orbán from the 2015 refugee crisis, the Ukrainian migration crisis did not feature in Orbán's speeches as extensively, as it was governed by more-technical solutions that we list below. This means that the data collected for Ukraine rely only on the analysis of newspaper and journal articles.

Since 2010, analyses on crisis and socio-political change in Hungary, the rule of law and Hungary's shifting geopolitical orientation, as well as migration governance, have featured extensively in Hungarian and Western academic and media debates (Bánkuti, Halmai and Scheppele 2012). Considering this debate, the empirical material of this article departs from Viktor Orbán's re-formulation of Hungarian conservatism – which was originally associated with the ideas of József Antall, who served as the first prime minister of Hungary after 1990 – and national rather than European solutions to international problems such as migration featuring in Hungarian language political discussions and media outlets. Here, we refer to the conservative, centrist and liberal media outlets in Hungary in order to see how they have embedded narratives, slogans and tropes from Orbán's speeches. We also looked at opinion pieces such as editorials in conservative, centrist and liberal media outlets and used the simple keyword *migració* (migration) in order to collect as many examples as possible. During the period of the so-called migration crisis, between 2015 and 2018, we collected 431 pieces (91 in *Népszava*, 232 in *Magyar Hírlap* and 108 from hvg.hu) and traced narratives, slogans and tropes in relation to migration embedded in political speeches. Finally, we selected 50 articles out of the 431 we collected which had a similar distribution from conservative, centrist and liberal outlets.

While noting that Viktor Orbán's leadership has been divisive both nationally and internationally on migration and other issues related to Europe, the article also underlines the deeply polarised nature of Hungarian politics. This environment generates concerns for researchers who need to account for full partiality when it comes to elaborating on political narratives and may compromise reflexivity in data collection. However, the reflexivity problem that this article notes should be understood from the perspective of the general concerns that discursive scholars face in their work on politically polarised contexts. There is value in delving deep into the context and building local knowledge around which research problems appear. This still leaves us with the issue of how to achieve impartiality in data collection in politically polarised contexts whereby the political stance of the analysts could determine the opinions that we analyse. Fairhurst (2009: 1609) argues that 'without the pressure to build generalizable theory, discursive scholars feel freer to embrace the context and, especially, its historical, cultural, and political aspects'. Yet should a comprehensive elaboration of historical, cultural and political factors specific to the context preclude theoretical generalisations? While it goes beyond the remit of this article to offer comprehensive responses to these questions, it still underlines the fact that discursive studies gain from following changes in formal institutions and analysing political developments in tandem (Korkut *et al*. 2016). This is why the article offers a study on the making of the reception policy in Hungary during two refugee crises, considering both the discursive and the institutional aspects of this process conjointly.

We refer to how the Hungarian media has circulated the Hungarian government's migration narratives, looking at newspaper articles as well as direct quotations from political speeches. Those using newspapers as a resource for research should bear in mind the full control of the public media by the Hungarian government and how the media authority regulates the private media to prevent any anti-government voices. Overall, media freedom is extensively compromised in Hungary (European Federation of Journalists 2019) and this would possibly affect how institutional and discursive practices regarding migration politics have become represented in print and digital media in Hungary. As the International Press Institute stated, Hungary's public service media have been deformed into an audio-visual propaganda tool of the ruling party. Editorial independence is virtually non-existent for news programming on public radio and TV, which uncritically amplifies the Fidesz party's messaging. There are only a handful of left-liberal voices that could propose a critical reflection on politics, including Orbán's migration discourse. However, previous research has shown that even such voices in the media did not take a critical position on migration politics and discourse either but simply engaged with it, offering sometimes only alternative justification for the securitisation of migration (Gyollai and Korkut 2020: 11). Therefore, despite the deep polarisation in the country between the conservative and the liberal factions, it does not look as though the latter could present an alternative discourse to displace Viktor Orbán's and his government's eminence in the making of migration narrative. When it came to media analysis, while achieving impartiality in data collection in politically polarised contexts was our aim, this paper shows that conservative-centrist-left/liberal media outlets actually did *not* differ too much in their evaluation of how Hungarian politicians narrativised external migration. This, in a way, disqualified the need for impartiality in the face of the deeply entrenched partiality of the Hungarian media.

Overall, our article makes ample references to Hungarian language discussions in order to portray Orbán's earlier narratives to allegedly defend Europe from external migration and moralise using executive control by leaving a narrow playing field for his left-liberal critics. It also elaborates on how the Ukrainian migration crisis mitigated this situation, as it provided another instrument for Orbán to carve out a leadership role for himself exploiting insecurities – this time beyond the migration crisis but which the general crisis around the war in Ukraine has fostered within the general population. The article investigates how leaders stimulate the processes by which their followers' understanding of the world is produced (van Leuuwen 2007: 95) to generate their audiences. The theoretical foundation of the article relies on leaders' social knowledge

production, legitimation and inculcation of such knowledge among their followers (van Leuuwen 2007) in a bid to foster an audience for discursive and institutional change for the allegedly sole purpose of responding to a crisis. The 2015 Middle Eastern and the 2022 Ukrainian migration crises have provided Orbán with such tools.

When debating legitimation, the leadership literature emphasises the importance of the social construction of context and social reality (Fairhurst 2009; Grint 2005) by the leader and sensemaking (Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991; Weick 1995), visionmaking (Bennis and Nanus 1985) and cultural transformation (Deal and Kennedy 1982) to qualify the leader's capacity. Leaders' change agency (Mabey and Freeman 2010) and their effect on their followers (Yukl 1999: 286) also matters. Thus, leaders' discursive tools persuade their followers that action is required to recapture safety and stability. Skilfully used, these discursive tools shift people from a previously comfortable environment to a less familiar one (Mabey and Freeman 2010: 512). Essentially, the social construction of the problem legitimises the deployment of a particular form of moral authority and limits alternatives to an extent that those involved begin to react supportively (Grint 2005: 1475).

The media, opposition parties, political colleagues and activists construct certain 'truths' about political leadership and leader effectiveness (Grint 2000, cited in Iszatt-White 2011: 119). The theoretical contribution of this article is to emphasise discursive processes in the making of migration politics – but conjointly with formal institutional changes. As noted above, discursive processes operate in conjunction with institutional mechanisms in political contexts, qualifying the subsequent social processes and power relations (Korkut *et al*. 2016). Institutional mechanisms relate to collective rationality and identity construction (Pye 2005) for they enable the subsequent transmission and consolidation of political choices during crises. Therefore, while collective rationality is essential to the consolidation and operation of leadership in crisis contexts, its making requires both institutional and discursive tools. In view of this conceptualisation, we first reflect on Hungarian reception policy and its changes since 2015 from the perspective of both the Middle Eastern and the Ukrainian refugee crises.

Hungarian reception policy changes since 2015

Back in 2015, when a large number of Middle-Eastern refugees were approaching the southern borders of Hungary, the Fidesz government was unprepared for their protection and reception – let alone their integration. While the same government was occupied with changing most of the cardinal laws of the country, including the Hungarian constitution, the laws and policies that governed migration remained untouched. A 2012 UNHCR report on Hungary described the then-legislations on asylum as a policy 'consistent with international and European standards and contain[ing] essential safeguards'. However, when millions of displaced Middle-Eastern refugees started their journey towards the EU, the Hungarian government bandwagoned its emergent scepticism with European federalism and multiculturalism to its politics, policy and narratives of border management that have long been manifest amongst other conservative circles in Europe. In the case of Hungary, however, this implied keeping migrants at bay and in transition spaces around the EU's external borders – making it impossible for them to settle down in Hungary by rejecting their protection. Therefore, the Hungarian migration regime followed a course that maintained a central role for nation states rather than accepting that the European Union play a central role.

From summer 2014 to the end of 2015, the securitisation of migration in Hungary first started discursively but soon led to more fundamental legal and policy changes, beginning with the government's announcement of a 175km-long fence along the Serbian border and Hungary suspending the Dublin III regulations in order to remain a zero-migration country. In order to consolidate its voters base, the government called for a series of *nemzeti konzultáció* (national consultation) on migration, which operated through letters sent to citizens'

homes asking them to express their opinion on issues that the government deemed important. The language used in these consultations was symptomatic of the securitisation frame by Fidesz. At the same time, the government placed billboards all across the country with slogans such as 'If you come to Hungary, you need to abide by our laws/respect our culture' and 'You cannot take away the jobs of Hungarians'. As Szalai and Gőbl (2015: 24–25, cited in Gyollai and Korkut 2020) note, 'The billboards were clearly not targeting migrants, but the general population: they were all in Hungarian and used the informal speech register, which in this context suggested condescension'.

Boldizsár Nagy (2016) considered the developments in this period in Hungary as 'denial', 'deterrence', 'obstruction', 'punishment', lacking solidarity and breaching domestic, European and international law. Hungary has clearly avoided its obligations regarding asylum-seekers and portrayed itself as the 'protector of the EU' (Korkut 2020: 11). The government managed to keep most of the public in the dark through smear campaigns against migration based on forged or out-of-perspective imagery in order to influence public opinion. In hindsight, we can see that the Fidesz narrative paid well as their handling of the refugee crisis resulted in consecutive electoral victories. Since 2016, applications for asylum can only be processed at the transit zones and anyone apprehended crossing Hungary's borders at other points are sent back to the Serbian side of the border fence. Kallius, Monterescu and Rajaram (2016) noted the construction of a border fence and the transit zones at the border with neighbouring Serbia and Croatia as an attempt to 'fabricate the political through processes of marginalisation and exclusion wherein a number of groups have at best a tangential relation to the political norm'. Particularly, the creation of transit zones allowed the Hungarian government to culminate the securitisation of mobility and 'fix (...) asylum-seekers in time and space and make them invisible to mainstream society' (Scott 2018: 27 in Gyollai and Korkut 2020). These reception centres on the southern border of Hungary enabled the inhumane treatment of refugees by the authorities and resulted in a myriad of court cases for human rights breaches (Zalan 2017, in Gyollai and Korkut 2020: 11). Following the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union (2020) – Joined Cases C-924/19 PPU and C-925/19 PPU – case against Hungary, the reception centres were shut down all over the country. This contributed to one of the largest policy changes since 2015, although it made Hungary entirely unable to provide help for the arriving Ukrainian refugees in 2022.

Overall, Hungarian migration policy was completely reshaped, starting in 2015, making it impossible for refugees to complete their migration journeys into Europe as the Fidesz government had turned Hungary into a country defending Europe's south-eastern borders. Moreover, the Hungarian government also introduced the so-called 'Stop Soros Act' in May 2018, which comprised a legislative package with, *inter alia*, amendments to the Criminal Code that effectively criminalised NGOs and civil-society actors providing humanitarian support for asylum-seekers (Gyollai and Korkut 2020). While the conservative media picked up on the alleged role that Soros has played more extensively than did the centrist and left/liberal media, the latter's criticisms and commentary on this law remained at best tepid (Korkut 2020). In the end, curtailing the functions of NGOs and removing opposition eventually opened up more space for the Hungarian government to manage migration politics without much opposition. In response to this, the European Union started an infringement process concerning the Sargentini report for the European Parliament, calling on the Council to determine, pursuant to Article 7(1) of the Treaty on European Union, the existence of a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded, leading to the current rule-of-law procedure launched against Hungary in early 2022.

The refugee crisis unleashed in 2015 by the wars in the Middle East and particularly the civil war in Syria presented Orbán with the possibility to consolidate his illiberal politics. Orbán warned that migrants were watching the EU from Hungary's southern borders with what he called their 'wolf eyes'. He introduced it as the Hungarian government's duty to protect Hungarians from this very threat. Yet despite having stated that

migrants had ‘wolf eyes’ watching from outside the borders of Europe, Orbán did not decline the obligation to extend humanitarianism in certain circumstances. He stated that ‘migrants have been lured into making such dangerous journeys with the promise of welfare at their destinations. It is those terrorists who exploit some of those migrants’ [legitimate] claims [and] migrant groups are full of conflicts’.[1] Notwithstanding this humanitarian stance, Orbán still upheld his warning to the Brussels elite, the European leaders and the Hungarian opposition, who allegedly advocated that ‘all people who come to Europe intend to live here according to [European] customs and laws. Yet, the facts are showing the opposite’.[2] Instead, an ideal Europe, with regard to the handling of external migration, would be one where [security forces] retain the duty to make sure that whoever comes follows national laws.[3]

Orbán also maintained that Hungary has been self-sufficient and that, when migration reached its doors, the country did not expect help from anyone; he also stated that Europe would have done better had it not rejected Hungarian solutions that were both operational and useful. Proposing that the European public needs to be heard, Orbán stated that ‘We don’t know what Europeans think about migration but we certainly know what their leaders think’.[4] Once again, with his narrative, Orbán sought to present himself and the migration politics of the Hungarian government as ‘pro-European’, in an attempt to establish a direct link with the European public even while capturing a continent-wide disenchantment with the elite. Finally, Orbán presented what the European elite has done on migration politics as ‘hurry-scurry’ that led to chaos and suggested that European institutions,[5] faced with the [migratory] movement of people, had resigned itself and accepted that migration could not be stopped and that they could not do anything against it. Yet, he suggested that it was rather ‘more humanitarian not to accept them [those without refugee status] into the EU than having them on the European territory for a few years and to force removal in a few years’.[6] Orbán continued to state that ‘We did not know what successful integration is’ yet we knew that migration is the Trojan horse of terrorism. In the end, the EU needs to see sense.[7] The future course of Europeanisation and the role that the member states can play in effect is then as follows. It is noteworthy that, regardless of ideological colour, all conservative, left-liberal and centrist media elaborated on the theme of the ‘danger’ that migrants and refugees posed to Europe too (Korkut 2020), making Orbán’s discourse and politics to stop external migration so resonant and dominant in Hungary.

The reception of Ukrainian refugees in Hungary

There has been no significant change in recent decades in migration from Ukraine towards Hungary (KSH 2022). The data suggest a decline in migration from 2009 up until 2014 (Erőss, Kovály and Tátrai 2016; KSH 2022). The period of turbulence in the Eastern Ukrainian region which began in 2014 increased migration flows by 60 per cent, although the most popular migration routes were to Poland, Slovakia and Western Europe. Since Hungary is the only non-Slavic-speaking country among Ukraine’s Western neighbours, we see the migration towards Hungary being mostly of Hungarian-speaking people from the Transcarpathian region (Erőss *et al*. 2016). Between 2009 and 2021, fewer than 10,000 people migrated to Hungary from Ukraine each year (KSH 2022).

According to the EMMI (Ministry of Human Resources), more than half a million people had crossed the border from Ukraine to Hungary by the end of March 2022 (Magyarország Kormánya 2022a) and the latest communications from the Hungarian government estimated the number of refugees in Hungary as more than a million (Mohos 2022). Unlike the securitisation narrative that qualified the 2015 refugee crisis, the Hungarian government pledged that, for the Ukrainian refugees ‘they would do whatever it takes for all refugees’ in their first press release – although reading the text further it becomes apparent that what they meant was all refugees arriving from Ukraine (Magyarország Kormánya 2022a). Viktor Orbán himself sent a video message for the

'Stand Up for Ukraine' charity event stating 'I would like to assure our Ukrainian friends that everyone fleeing the war will continue to find a safe haven in Hungary. We continue our support programmes, we take care of refugees and we continuously raise and provide the necessary financial resources. Hungary helps!' (Magyarország Kormánya 2022a). The 'Hungary Helps!' narrative refers to the role that Hungary has adopted to protect Middle-Eastern Christians in their ancestral lands and make humanitarianism an aspect of their populist foreign policy (Hisarlıoğlu *et al*. 2022). Despite a clear pro-Ukrainian stance, the Fidesz government still refused to uphold economic sanctions against Russia by emphasising that '[they] could not help Ukraine by ruining [their] own economy and lives. That would be entirely pointless' (Magyarország Kormánya 2022b). Although the pro-Fidesz press and the government itself declared that Hungary was providing every possible help to the refugees, the only work that appeared to have been carried out was essentially done by local and national charities. As Erőss (2022) states, in the first couple of days on the Hungarian side of the Ukraine border there was spontaneous help offered by locals to the arriving waves of mostly Hungarian citizens. After this, there were help centres opening where refugees were transported after crossing the border; these were run by aid organisations or local councils (Erőss 2022). While there are no data indicating that the government has coordinated or contributed to the primary protection of refugees, evidently the government still sought to take all the credit for this. Therefore, in setting the governance of the Ukrainian crisis apart from the Middle Eastern crisis, the Fidesz government has pursued informal governance tools unlike the much formalised and institutionalised tools that it devised to handle the 2015 crisis. Yet, it did not necessarily put further institutionalisation in place to support its reception policy.

Yet, the Temporary Protection Status for Ukrainian refugees, which was formally activated by the 2001 directive by the Council on 4 March 2022, extended initial legal protection and certain rights to Ukrainian refugees. Moreover, Hungary, as a member state of the EU, played a part in providing immediate relief by not hindering the border-crossings of Ukrainian refugees – in contrast to their migration policy towards arrivals from the Middle East since 2015. The Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Péter Szijjártó, emphasised that:

> *Illegal immigrants and those fleeing Ukraine cannot be equated. The Hungarian authorities have a lot of experience with the former (...) their actions are aggressive, they violate the green border, destroy the infrastructure, and attack the police. Ukrainian refugees, on the other hand, arrive legally, through border crossings, respect the rules and, if necessary, stand in line for hours or even days* (Flori 2022).

Nevertheless, to draw a parallel between the 2015 refugee crisis and the current migration towards Hungary from Ukraine, we can state that in neither instance did the refugees approaching the Hungarian border plan to stay in Hungary. The vast majority of them only wished to enter the Schengen area and to travel further to more developed countries within Western Europe (Gyollai and Korkut 2020). Out of the 500,000 border-crossings from Ukraine to Hungary, as of 15 June, only 24,615 applications were registered for temporary protected status, while other EU countries together received 3.2 million applications; thus the Hungarian participation in the EU's efforts to accommodate refugees does not even reach 1 per cent (Mohos 2022). Even among those with temporary protection, we cannot know for certain how many stayed on in Hungary.

The greatest difference between the 2015 and the 2022 crises is that the Hungarian government has left the Ukrainian border 'unregulated' in comparison to the over-regulated southern border, which is still guarded by a fence since the refugee crisis of 2015. While the Criminal Code was amended at this time to ensure that the 'border closure' was a successful policy against the waves of refugees (Gyollai and Korkut 2020) the Ukrainian border remained completely unregulated by the parliament. Undoubtedly, the Ukrainian refugees fit well with the conservative and Christian family values that Orbán endorsed – to provide for Hungary in particular and

Europe in general – as they were mostly Christian and often Hungarian-speaking Ukrainian elderly people, women and children, whereas the arrivals through the southern border were alleged threats to such values. Still consistent with their anti-migration politics, the Fidesz government simply turned their heads away from the situation at the Ukrainian border and let the EU Directive and charity organisations attend to the issue of refugees rather than formalising a full-fledged reception policy – in contrast to its neighbours. Therefore, unlike the Middle-Eastern refugees, Hungary tacitly facilitated the Ukrainians' protection but did not put any institutions in place for their long-term reception. In this way, the reception conditions for Ukrainians are not much different from the earlier cases of refugees.

Nevertheless, owing to the implementation of the EU Temporary Protection Directive, long queues were avoided at the border-crossings as the authorities required only very little evidence of residence or nationality. Ukrainian ID cards are accepted in those cases when someone is not in possession of a passport and the entry is given automatically without any need for further paperwork. However, in order for the arrivals to receive temporary protection status in Hungary, they are required to travel to a destination where their cases can be processed. In order for them to travel within Hungary, the Hungarian Railways Zrt. (MÁV) introduced solidarity tickets, which anyone from Ukraine can use free of charge. On the larger motorways, there were signs in Ukrainian and English so that refugees could travel more easily. Hence, the application of the EU Directive facilitated the reception of Ukrainian refugees, setting them apart from those from the Middle East. Yet, their status is not ascertained right at the border-crossing and they are obliged to make lengthy trips.

Still, the securitisation of migration and the highly punitive tone of migration politics directed at NGOs have left a legacy, the impact of which is pretty acute, considering the informal underpinnings of Hungarian reception policy. This means that, even though local authorities and city councils pledged to provide temporary assistance to Ukrainians in the form of housing, clothes and food, the majority of support is provided by the many NGOs and charities. As the migration-related support system was completely demoted by the government during the period between 2015 and 2016, the Ukrainian refugees now face a crisis in Hungary. Firstly, 90 per cent of the refugees fleeing the Russian offensive are women and children (UNHCR 2022) as the current state of emergency in Ukraine demands that military-aged men remain in the country. This presented dangers such as human trafficking, smuggling, violence and sexual exploitation. There is also a housing crisis unfolding in Hungary, making it more difficult for refugees to find accommodation. In the current situation, the Hungarian state has not been able to provide housing on a massive scale, therefore this task has been left to NGOs and private individuals, although their capacity, too, is limited (Moravecz 2022). The other reason for the lack of housing options for Ukrainian refugees is that the Hungarian government closed almost all refugee accommodation during the period 2015 to 2016 in order to discourage asylum-seekers from entering the country.

Despite its earlier critical discourse in view of the role that the European Commission has played in humanitarian assistance to refugees, the Hungarian government has, this time, endorsed using REACT-EU funds to assist the refugees fleeing the war. It has also been reported that the Hungarian government deliberately over-estimated the number of asylum-seekers in order to receive the largest share possible (Moravecz and Tarnay 2022) – perhaps to compensate for their missing EU covid recovery funds over corruption and rule of law abuses in Hungary. However, Orbán is looking for the country's earlier foes to blame for the war in Ukraine. In his most recent press talk, he stated that György Soros would 'make a fortune from a Ukrainian-Russian war, thus he wishes to lengthen it' (Mandiner 2022). As we noted above, the Hungarian-born American businessman and philanthropist has been a target of Fidesz in the past. The government previously alleged that Soros caused and funded the refugee crisis in 2015 (Than 2017) drawing parallels between terrorism and migration and inciting hatred against migrants. In the current political climate,

too, Viktor Orbán’s references to Soros foreground yet again the oppressive and polarising narrative of the Fidesz party, which the country experienced during the 2015 refugee crisis.

Conclusion

Comparing the 2015 and 2022 refugee crises presents us with both continuities and ruptures in Hungarian reception policy. While, in terms of the protection and reception conditions, the Ukrainian border-crossing is significantly more humane – mostly because the current migration wave includes Hungarian citizens and Hungarian ethnic minorities living in Ukraine – in terms of facilities, the conditions have been limited. During the 2015 refugee crisis, the Hungarian government targeted NGOs which raised funds to help refugees and securitised the whole migration issue while, during the Ukrainian crisis, there was more of a *laissez-faire* attitude towards NGOs. Though their role was never formalised in the delivery of reception policies, the government did not interfere with their activities although it did try to take all the credit. In view of the legal foundations of the reception of refugees, the two cases also present differences, especially considering the racist and highly formalised institutionalisation of border closures and transit centres at the Serbian border and the crossing of Ukrainians into Hungary under the guidance of the EU Temporary Protection Directive. This despite the fact that Hungary did not support the extension of the EU Directive on Temporary Protection Status to Ukrainian refugees but had to accept it in the face of the binding European Council decision. As a criticism of this directive, Gergely Gulyás, Minister of the Prime Minister’s Office, stated that Hungary did not support the EU’s initiative and commented that neither Hungary nor any other V4 countries supported the directive, which initially dated back to 2001 as a late response to the conflict in former Yugoslavian and Kosovo. He added that ethnic Hungarians living in Ukraine would not receive protection since they were citizens and Hungary would offer help to non-Hungarians in the long term (HVG.hu 2022).

This cynical asylum policy took systematic discrimination against refugees to a new level in Hungary. While Hungary had to extend a special status enforced by the EU to refugees fleeing the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, the masses on the Serbian border remained vulnerable. Currently there are more than 4,000 Middle-Eastern and African asylum-seekers camping on the Serbian side of the Hungarian southern border, with an almost zero likelihood of them receiving any recognised refugee status from the Hungarian authorities (Dragojlo 2022). This puts Hungary in violation of the Refugee Convention of 1951, in particular its Article 3 requiring states to apply the provisions of this Convention to refugees without discrimination because of race, religion or country of origin.

Despite the relatively humane treatment of refugees from Ukraine, however, its governance still resonates with the 2015 crisis. In both instances, the Hungarian government sought to moralise the role that Hungary has played – in the earlier instance by defending the nation and Europe from the instability that foreign invaders would cause and, in the second instance, defending stability and energy security in Hungary in the face of an instability caused by external events. Hence, refugees were markers of a great instability that would put Hungarian families in peril. In both cases the government sought to affect their domestic audiences by scaremongering and seeking to consolidate their voter base by proposing to defend them from an invasion and war that had nothing to do with Hungary. This has repeatedly justified the government’s not providing the due reception facilities – in the first instance even curtailing primary care and protection and punishing independent NGOs that attempted to provide them. In terms of the political underpinnings of migration governance, Orbán and his government’s discourse set the tone of migration politics, affecting their legal aspects prospectively. In both instances, policies were *ad hoc* and reactionary rather than responsive, although what sets the Ukrainian refugee crisis apart is also its *ad hoc* legal composition. In terms of discourse, too, we see a significant difference between how Hungary received Ukrainian refugees and (mis-)treated the Middle-Eastern asylum-

seekers. On the one hand, for the latter the message from the Hungarian government was loud and clear – demarcated by the 175-kilometre-long fence along the Serbian–Hungarian border, the slow application processing times and the inhumane conditions in which asylum-seekers were unlawfully held in detention centres. On the other hand, the current situation on the North-Eastern borders of Hungary is *laissez-faire* – not obstructive but not fully receptive either. Therefore, Orbán and his government retained their leadership intact in a bid to moralise the role that Hungary should play in the exclusivist discourses in effect in both crises by rejecting non-Europeans in the first instance and accepting only Europeans in the second.

Notes

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Challenging (Internal) Integration: Debating Internal Displacement and Integration in Greek-Cypriot Refugees' Oral Histories

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The turn of the century has brought the issue of internal displacement to the forefront of the international agenda, recognising it as a matter of global concern. Scholarly research has also taken an interest, examining important aspects such as the integration of internally displaced persons into their resettlement areas. This paper examines the case of Greek-Cypriot 'refugees', a population which has experienced internal displacement for the past 50 years. Despite enjoying certain privileges granted by the Greek-Cypriot government and sharing a common language, religion and cultural practices with the non-displaced population, oral narratives collected and analysed in this study reveal a complex interaction with non-refugees during resettlement. These narratives highlight the challenges of internal displacement and emphasise that a shared ethnicity alone is insufficient to ensure social inclusion. In order to comprehend these complexities, the paper sought to engage with theories of refugee integration, with this engagement revealing the limitations of indicator-oriented conceptualisations in cases of internal displacement. The way in which these oral narratives contradict an observable indicator such as ethnicity is a point which we should take into serious consideration.

Keywords: internal displacement, Greek-Cypriot refugees, oral history, refugee integration, resettlement, objective indicators

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Introduction

The turn of the century brought the issue of internal displacement onto the international agenda and recognised it as a matter of worldwide concern. The dissolutions of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union served as prime examples of such mass forced migrations (Brubaker 1994; Cohen and Deng 1998; Djuric 2010; Mooney 2005). Over 20 years later, the European continent is witnessing a massive wave of internal mass displacement due to armed conflict in Ukraine. Scholarly research has rekindled its interest in issues like discrimination, marginalisation and the integration of the displaced in their resettlement areas (Pikulicka-Wilczewska and Uehling 2017; Uehling 2021; Sasse 2020). As the number of internal mass displacements due to armed conflict continues to rise and scholarly interest in these cases grows, examining past instances of internal mass displacement becomes more relevant than ever. This exploration sheds light on the experiences of these individuals and enhances our understanding of their predicament within scholarly research.

This paper engages with the case of Greek-Cypriot 'refugees', a population which has experienced internal displacement within its own country for the past 50 years. It is important to clarify at this point that, although commonly referred to as 'refugees', signifying individuals forced to leave their own country, these Greek-Cypriots have not trespassed international borders and, in strict legal terms, should be classified instead as internally displaced.[1] As Zetter (1994) has identified, however, the term 'refugees' was used as a convenient and realistic designation of their social status and identity. These individuals have retained full citizenship rights in their country and share a cultural affinity with the local population in their resettlement areas. Additionally, they have benefited from various governmental social provisions (Zetter 1991, 1994, 2021). However, an important aspect of the experiences of Greek-Cypriot refugees, specifically their interactions with locals in the areas where they resettled after their expulsion, has largely been overlooked in scholarly research or has been given secondary importance compared to general analyses of their social condition. This paper explores this interaction between internally displaced and local populations in Cyprus and examines how it intersects with other aspects of internal mass displacement, such as shared ethnicity and citizenship status. In seeking to comprehend this relationship, the paper engages with Ager and Strang's (2008, 2010) well-known theory on refugee integration. However, the paper argues that relying solely on indicator-oriented conceptualisations often falls short in capturing the multifaceted nature of resettlement efforts, as social inclusion encompasses a range of experiences that may not be readily captured by such indicators. In the concluding remarks, the paper advocates for a narrative-driven approach as the most effective methodology with which to understand the experiences of refugees/displaced populations, shedding light on their predicaments.

An important aspect of this paper – and the overarching argument of this special section – is the methodology employed to examine the experiences of refugees/displaced persons. Three decades ago, Roger Zetter (1991) contended that understanding the plight of refugees necessitates listening to their own voices, allowing them to exert control over their circumstances and define their experiences, rather than relying solely on programme outputs or policy assumptions. However, Bakewell (2008) argues that research on mass displacement, one of the most significant humanitarian crises of our time, has primarily been driven by policy concerns and general examinations of the legal and social conditions faced by the displaced. This paper challenges these tendencies by placing emphasis on the actual voices of displaced persons, exploring the diverse ways in which Greek-Cypriot refugees narrate their interactions with locals and how these narratives reflect their perceptions of their position within Greek-Cypriot society (Bruner 2002; Hammack 2011). The fact that these narratives often contradict or present a different perspective compared to observable indicators underscores the need for careful examination of contemporary crises of internal mass displacement, such as those currently unfolding in Eastern Europe and Ukraine.

This paper adopts an empirical approach, focusing on oral narratives regarding the experience of internal mass displacement. It was through efforts to understand these narratives and their connection to other aspects of internal displacement that the theoretical context of refugee integration was explored. Consequently, the paper follows a different structure compared to a typical theoretical paper. The first section discusses the methodology employed and the use of oral history. The subsequent section delves into the case of Greek-Cypriot internal mass displacement, providing a review of pertinent scholarly works. In the penultimate section, three examples of narratives from three Greek-Cypriot refugees are presented and analysed, while the discussion engages with Ager and Strang's model of refugee integration and the complexities involved in applying such theoretical frameworks to actual experiences of internal displacement. In conclusion, the paper highlights the significance of narrative-oriented research as a methodology that amplifies the voices of those directly involved in the experience of mass displacement.

Methodology

Methodologically, this paper is based on oral-history interviews conducted between 2017 and 2018 with three female members of my extended family. These interviews were part of my doctoral research, which aimed to explore the memory of displacement and the significance of home within a Greek-Cypriot extended family. The only way to have insights into how family members remember the influence of displacement, however, was to study one. Due to the simultaneous presence of the personal experience and the socio-historical context that I intended to examine, I made the decision to focus my research on my entire maternal extended family. This encompassed a total of 28 individuals: 14 'historical eyewitnesses' who had experienced the Turkish invasion, two individuals from the '1.5 generation' (Suleiman 2002), and 12 individuals born after 1974 and classified as 'second generation'. The paper concentrates on the three most poignant testimonies from the historical eyewitnesses, covering both the early and the later stages of reception and adjustment. Additionally, it includes excerpts from testimonies given by other historical eyewitnesses and second-generation individuals to support its argument.

Certain socio-economic characteristics of the family were relevant as they exemplified the historical process under investigation. Like numerous other Greek-Cypriot refugee families, my family was large and predominantly rural, relying on livestock and agriculture as their primary sources of income (Loizos 1981, 2008). The experience of displacement had a profound impact on the lives of family members and their diverse paths in life reflect the societal changes that have transpired in Greek-Cypriot society since 1974. The resettlement of five out of the eight nuclear families in Nicosia serves as evidence of the widespread urbanisation after 1974. In terms of occupation, family members found employment in various sectors of the expanding post-1974 economy, with some working in the private sector and others in the public one. Moreover, the political affiliations of individual families and members mirror the political landscape of the post-1974 Greek-Cypriot community. Some families lean towards ethno-centric political tendencies, while others lean towards the left – and there are also those who remain apolitical. Even within a nuclear family, political beliefs can vary.

As Holger Briel (2013) has documented, oral history is well-suited for capturing the diverse and sometimes contradictory memories and interpretations of events in Cyprus. Its emphasis on the subjectivity of memory is particularly crucial for the analysis presented in this paper, setting it apart from traditional historical writing. As famously stated by Alessandro Portelli (2006: 36), oral history 'tells us less about events than about their meaning', while Perks and Thomson (2006) emphasise that it provides insights into the meanings of historical experiences and the interplay between memory, personal identity and collective identity. Therefore, when

refugees recount past experiences and express their identities in relation to non-refugees in specific ways, it is essential to comprehend these narratives as processes and practices of becoming.

The interviews themselves were designed to be semi-structured, aiming to capture the overall trajectory of individuals' past and anticipated lives (Rosenthal 1993). They commenced with a brief introduction and a request for participants to discuss significant facts and experiences that were of personal importance to them. Subsequently, an open-ended question was posed to explore the meanings of displacement as perceived by the participants. The purpose of this initial question was to encourage a narrative encompassing the diverse interpretations of displacement – regardless of generation, age or gender. Following this, a combination of biographical and theme-specific questions was employed to guide participants in providing a chronological account of their lives based on predetermined themes such as extended family relations, post-1974 housing, employment opportunities or engagement with the refugee community.

During the process of data analysis, I sought to apply Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) psychosocial perspective, which posits that individuals' inner worlds are shaped by their experiences of the outer world and that understanding these inner worlds requires an understanding of how they enable individuals to engage with the outer world. Embracing the psychosocial approach entails rejecting the notion that a narrative provides an exact representation of the narrator's experience and, instead, recognising it as only one aspect of a larger whole. This perspective has implications for both the role of the researcher and the impact on the knowledge generated. According to the psychosocial approach, the analysis of narratives should take into account the biographies and personal histories of the narrators. Thus, I had to acknowledge the multiple levels of biographical similarity between the narrators and myself, which often influenced the construction of meaning within the interview setting. This process carried the risk of 'distortions and preconceptions of social reality', particularly the danger of making assumptions based on prior knowledge and experiences (Kikumura 1986). This concern, commonly referred to as a 'loss of objectivity' in social research literature, was a recurring issue during the fieldwork (Breen 2007).

Moreover, these testimonies were shaped not only by the biographies of both myself and the narrators but also by our subjectivities. In the context of oral-history interviews, this is often evidenced by an increased awareness of how intersubjectivity influences the type of knowledge produced (Summerfield 1998). Due to the close family connections, I interacted with them on a daily basis outside the research environment, which continued even after the research was conducted. This relationship was a dialogic encounter in which our efforts to reconstruct the past enlisted both my and the narrators' emotions and subjectivities (Roper 2004). Consequently, our reactions and feelings became integral to the analysis process, serving as a means to comprehend the content being conveyed and the underlying motivations behind it.

The methodological section concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations that arose during the research study. It is worth noting that the study received ethical approval from the University of Essex Ethics Committee. Among the practical considerations recognised was the issue of access, as there was no need for me to negotiate any form of admittance to a social space to which I was already a member. However, upon review of the proposal, the ethics committee identified a potential issue with informed consent, as the personal relationship between the researcher and participants could be perceived as 'coercing participation'. Furthermore, after the first interview, I observed that the informed aspect of consent was also compromised, as participants often signed consent forms without fully reading their content. To address these issues, I provided additional verbal information and affirmation of the voluntariness of participation before conducting the interviews.

Other important ethical issues that must be addressed include anonymity and confidentiality. First, the names presented here are pseudonyms, despite the original study using participants' real names. This change was made in accordance with a point in the consent form which stated that any separate academic publication

resulting from the study would not use the real names of the participants. In addition, due to the close relationship between the researcher and participants, the latter often disclosed personal information that they might otherwise have kept private. During the interviews, instances of deviant behaviour or other sensitive information about family dynamics were mentioned. I chose not to use any information that could put the participants at risk or jeopardise relationships, even though this meant sacrificing data that would have otherwise been valuable for the study. This was a conscious decision that recognised the need to prioritise the confidentiality of participants.

The Greek-Cypriot refugees

As a result of the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus, approximately 180,000 Greek-Cypriots living in the north of the island fled to the south, while around 50,000 Turkish-Cypriots migrated in the opposite direction. Displaced Greek-Cypriots have retained full citizenship of the Republic of Cyprus and have been entitled to several support schemes, such as a large rehousing programme and extensive social provisions (Zetter 1991, 1994). While these government programmes have provided ongoing support to refugee families, they have also instigated a process by which those displaced were politically and economically excluded and privileged by turns; for example, while the large rehousing programme provided refugee families with affordable or even complimentary housing, it simultaneously segregated the refugee community in particular areas across Cyprus.

After 1974, the Green Line dividing the 'south' from the 'north' became a militarised *de facto* border that separated the two zones along ethnic lines. As noted by Vassiliadou (2002: 461), the people had to live with 'political insecurity, fear of violence and potential war' on a daily basis. Bryant and Papadakis (2012: 2–3) have described this social atmosphere as living 'in the shadow of violence, where the anticipation of violence defines the boundaries of the community'. Simultaneously, Greek-Cypriot society constructed an 'official' narrative for the Turkish invasion, focusing on the representation of victimhood and evoking a wound that anticipates future healing (Bryant 2012; Roudometof and Christou 2016). Greek-Cypriot refugees were central to this meta-narrative and faced political pressure not to settle permanently in the south, as it would interfere with demands for return. The unity of all Greek-Cypriots in the face of perceived threats from Turkey was emphasised to foster national identification. As Loizos (2008: 57) asserted, 'a great deal of what was written and said in Southern Cyprus for many years' relied on 'the story of the victimisation of the Greek-Cypriots'.

For 30 years, this was the reality for Cypriots. However, on 23 April 2003, the border between the 'north' and the 'south' opened, allowing members of the two communities to cross to the other side for the first time since 1974. According to Olga Demetriou (2007), this event brought about a transformation in political subjectivity and temporality in Cyprus, as it challenged the sovereignty of the political entity in the 'south' and forced Greek-Cypriots to reconsider their relation to their state. Moreover, the crossings to the 'north' for Greek-Cypriot refugees were accompanied by a tension between the remembered past and the present reality (Bryant 2010; Constantinou and Hatay 2010; Dikomitis 2012; Loizos 2008). Many encountered a different reality upon return, which diverged greatly from their memories. The opening of the border thus had a profound impact on the interpretations of Greek-Cypriot refugees regarding their relationship with the state, while simultaneously undermining the aspirations for return which many still held at the time.

Studies on Greek-Cypriot refugees have traditionally examined various aspects of their experience, such as housing, employment, health and welfare (Demetriou 2018; Kliot and Mansfield 1994; Loizos 1981, 2008; Zetter 1991, 1994). Recent anthropological research has also highlighted the practices of home-making in exile, where refugees establish new homes and social networks that reflect their pre-1974 lives (Dikomitis 2012; Jepson 2006; Taylor 2015). However, while the literature has predominantly focused on the loss of relationships due to displacement rather than the connections formed in exile, some studies have acknowledged

the complex dynamics between refugees and non-refugees. Zetter (1991) was among the first to address this relationship in the context of the housing programme, noting that refugees felt stigmatised and believed that non-refugees resented them due to the provision of housing. In a subsequent article, Zetter (1994) linked refugees' reluctance to engage in community development with issues of trust and the prevailing mercantile social relations in the 'south'. Additionally, Loizos (1981) observed that refugees insisted on not being understood by non-refugees, identifying this as an aspect of their emerging refugee identity. As this brief literature review demonstrates, the interaction between Greek-Cypriot refugees and non-refugees has often been encompassed within broader analyses of the social condition of refugees and the formation of a refugee identity.

The case of Greek-Cypriot refugees exhibits several characteristics that may also be observed in other cases of internal mass displacement currently unfolding in Eastern Europe. These refugees benefited from several facilitators, such as a common language, religion and cultural practices with non-refugees, as well as the retention of full citizenship in the Republic and access to various support programmes. Despite their challenging circumstances, many refugees were able to achieve notable success in the post-1974 period. Therefore, establishing a connection between refugees' personal narratives and the tangible aspects of their situation can be essential in comprehending their challenges and circumstances.

'Narrating integration': oral histories of refugee and non-refugee interactions

Before examining the three accounts, I provide a concise overview of the family's period of flight. The family originated from a village situated relatively close to the capital, Nicosia. During the month of August 1974, my grandparents and their six unmarried children fled the village, taking shelter in four different villages over the next year. First, they were hosted for a day by a friend of my grandfather. They were then hosted in a neighbouring village for approximately 40 days by a family they had never met before. Afterward, they squatted in a house amidst the mountain peaks of Troodos for a duration of three months. The family then headed to the village where my eldest married uncle lived, staying in his home for some weeks before renting a house in the same neighbourhood. Eventually, they were granted land in the village through a government self-build scheme, enabling them to construct a new house.

Contradictory interactions and the use of labelling in the narrative

Penelope was in her mid-20s at the time of the invasion in 1974. She was engaged to be married, with her fiancé being drafted during the Turkish offensive. They were married in 1975 but, unfortunately, her husband passed away in 1980. By 1978, the couple had already relocated to Nicosia and Penelope has remained there ever since. Despite becoming a widow, she achieved notable success in her career. She owned and operated her own private kindergarten school in the centre of Nicosia, which she eventually sold upon retiring. The loss of her husband had a profound impact on Penelope, leading her to become a devout Christian Orthodox. This added to the already significant importance that Eastern Orthodox Christianity holds in modern Greek socio-cultural identity (Roudometof 2011). Orthodox Christianity has played a prominent role in the self-perception of Greek-Cypriot refugees, offering a framework that gave meaning to their specific losses and provided a sense of comfort (Loizos 2008).

Penelope's account provides insights into a range of interactions with non-refugees, which encompassed diverse experiences and emotional investments. Her narrative highlighted two contrasting ends of the spectrum: instances where non-refugees embraced her family as their own and instances of discrimination. These accounts reflected a conflicted societal position, aligning with Zetter's (1999: 3) assertion that many

refugees perceive themselves to be 'both insiders and outsiders, incorporated yet excluded'. In the first of these experiences, Penelope recounted the meeting between her family and the family who hosted them in the second village during their flight. Her narrative conveyed a sense of appreciation and gratitude, indicating a mutual commitment between refugees and non-refugees to support each other during the challenging times that followed the invasion.

> *We were in the car, and we stopped on a road and a woman comes and asks me: 'Would you like to come to my house?' We did not know what to say. It was a miracle. It was a miracle indeed! Miss XXX, this was her name, she tells me: 'It's been three, four days that cars filled with people are passing but my husband YYY was not allowing me to take them in. Now he has seen that you stopped here and he told me to come to ask you if you would like to come to our house?' I have the shivers now that I am remembering it. Those people were truly our benefactors. We went, they loved us as if they were our relatives.*

The excerpt portrays both the chaotic situation that unfolded after the invasion and an instance where non-refugees chose to offer the family shelter and support, embracing them during these challenging circumstances. Penelope's narrative was filled with gratitude for the kindness shown by this family. She even interrupted her narration at one point to express her emotional investment in their kindness, emphasising that 'she had the shivers just recalling them'. Penelope named these individuals and acknowledged them as benefactors. In order to fully express her gratitude, she employed religious language and referred to them as a 'miracle'. In her eyes, the family took on a divine quality, bridging the gap between the natural and supernatural worlds through their actions (Papachristoforou 2014). However, the culmination of Penelope's narrative was the reimagining of their relationship as a familial one, the ultimate expression of affinity in Greek culture (Just 1991). The interaction between refugees and non-refugees in this case was so positive that the latter could even be considered kin.

The second excerpt from Penelope's account presents a contrasting view of the interaction between refugees and non-refugees. It depicts an incident of discrimination against Penelope's mother while she was working part-time at a packaging factory in the village where they resettled during the late 1970s. The passage conveys a sense of resentment towards the way certain non-refugees treated refugees.

> *(...) she was going as one* [worker]*; and sometimes they complained about her these 'gentlemen' in village X and she would come home crying. She went to work in a packaging factory that packed carrots and that 'gentleman' from village X... he saddened her. He told her: 'You should go to the orchards, do not come to the packaging factory'. And she cried, she came home crying. Everywhere the refugee is discriminated against, even in their own place.*

The second excerpt from Penelope's account sheds light on the discrimination experienced by her mother, who was denied employment at a packaging factory due to her farming background and refugee status. Penelope interpreted this act as exclusion from the emerging manufacturing industry and discrimination against her identity as a refugee and farmer. It reflected the marginalised position that refugees from a farming background, particularly older individuals, faced in the job market following the invasion, contributing to their disadvantaged position in society. In her concluding remarks, Penelope extended this discrimination as a shared experience among 'refugees', despite sharing a common ethnicity with non-refugees. It is worth noting that Penelope referred to those displaced as 'people' in the first excerpt but as 'refugees' in the second. This shift in terminology highlights a form of labelling, where Penelope goes beyond her personal experience

and creates a broader stereotype that not only encompasses the experience of displacement but also politicises it (Zetter 1991). The use of labelling is further discussed below.

The ambivalence in Penelope's narrative is linked to the extreme nature of the interactions she described with non-refugees. While there were instances where non-refugees showed compassion towards refugees, such as opening their homes or willingly paying higher taxes to support them (Loizos 1981), there were also situations where this interaction was strained or even discriminatory towards refugees. These contradictory interactions reflect conflicting societal positions: a sense of partial inclusion and simultaneous exclusion. Similar perplexing positions have been observed in other scholarly sources as well. For instance, Brubaker (2010) argues that, while refugees may be 'insiders' in certain aspects, they resist considering themselves as full members of society in other domains. This is exemplified by the specific language and terminology used by refugees to distinguish between different social groups, as seen in Penelope's narrative. Similar patterns of narration were observed among other participants in the study, including those of the second generation. Ares, Penelope's nephew, described how local children in the village in which he was born and grew up would often speak negatively about refugees, even when it came to making friends at school. In his interview, he ironically imitated the way local students would talk about refugees at school: 'Ah look, there is the *refugee*… We shall not hang out with them; they are not one of our own. They are foreign, they came from a different village'.[2] Interestingly, Ares used the label 'refugee' himself when discussing how this discrimination eventually subsided, stressing that this occurred due to demographic changes rather than a change in attitude among locals: '(…) because around my age and afterwards, there were many *refugees* born, *we* became more numerous in relation to locals… and we did not have these issues'.[3] Like his aunt Penelope, Ares projected the label 'refugee' through the narration in a way that suggests that his identity has been conditioned and takes precedence over a common ethnicity.

Lynn Abrams (2016) argues that oral history not only provides factual information but also allows individuals to express their subjective experiences of the past through the lens of the present. It is within this context that we should interpret the significance of the labelling in the testimonies mentioned above. A label is not merely an identification of an existing object; it also shapes the identity and behaviour of the person to whom it is applied (Cole 2018). Penelope and Ares were not simply recounting their past experiences of displacement; they were actively defining themselves and others, drawing on their lived experiences over time. As Georgia Cole (2018: 17) explains, these labels 'alongside describing individuals (…) and bestowing meaning, act as a repository, accumulating histories, ideas and connotations'.

The feeling of exploitation and the persistence of uncertainty

Demetra was in her early 20s and working for the police department during the invasion. In the late 1970s, she married a fellow refugee who held a high-ranking position at a banking institution, moving to Nicosia soon after. Despite both being refugees, they achieved significant success in their careers, acquiring multiple holiday properties in addition to their self-built family home. This economic success might suggest successful integration but there is more to the story. Demetra's oral history, particularly her recollection of the early reception of refugees, was filled with accounts of exploitation, while her overall narrative concerning her interaction with non-refugees was marked by uncertainty about the extent of refugees' social acceptance.

The first excerpt from Demetra's account describes an experience in a village close to where they were hosted by a non-refugee family. When asked about the environment in the village in which they were hosted, Demetra said that it was such a small village that it lacked any shops. As a result, they had to walk to a different village to obtain any necessary supplies.

> *We were going to Kakopetria to buy something. We were going, I recall in a shop (…) we needed shoes. And we went to a shop to buy shoes. Since we did not have! And I recall, whatever old shoes that shop had, it put them out so we would buy them and at twice the price! They did not even think that we left and we did not have any money.*

There was a notable moment in Demetra's narration that stood out. Her phrase 'since we did not have' and the passionate manner in which it was expressed seemed to not only highlight the family's lack of basic needs but also to assert the validity of her claims. It was as if she believed that the situation she was describing was so extraordinary that reiteration was required, anticipating potential doubts. It was precisely this extraordinary situation that made it difficult for her to comprehend why shop-owners would not acknowledge their unfortunate situation. Instead of offering assistance, they sought to exploit them. This disbelief towards the behaviour of shop-owners underscored the narrative and revealed a deep mistrust of non-refugees and social relations in the south. Moreover, it was a disbelief that aligned with Zetter's (1994) observation that refugees often criticised the prevailing mercantile culture in the south, where 'everything had to be bought'. Therefore, Demetra's disbelief of the shop-owners' conduct reflects broader concerns about community development and highlights the conflicting values between refugees and non-refugees.

The second excerpt from Demetra's account provides details about the family's stay with a refugee family. In contrast to Penelope's narrative, Demetra's depiction of events lacked the emotional expressions of gratitude that were prominent in her sister's account and was, instead, characterised by an unusual narrative focus.

> *She was a very kind woman. We stayed for a month; her house was good but!... she had put more people in and she gave one room for each (per family). And she stayed in a room with her own children. She took her children out of their rooms; she gave a room to us, a room to another family and a room to another family. And she stayed in one room herself. We stayed for a month and afterwards, we could not anymore.*

The excerpt began by acknowledging the compassionate nature of the woman and her generosity towards the family. Demetra recognised how this woman had provided them with shelter and had a well-maintained house. Following from this, however, she interwove the generosity of the woman with its undesirable consequences. The extraordinary act of kindness of relocating her own children in order to accommodate more refugees became overshadowed by its negative aftermath, the overcrowding of the house. The shift in narrative focus, from highlighting the act of generosity to emphasising its negative impact, was peculiar. It suggested that what needed to be acknowledged in the historical record was the threat to the family's well-being rather than the benevolence of this woman. The act of kindness became secondary, serving as a context for Demetra's description of her family's situation.

Demetra's narrative focus was quite unique as she depicted instances of both generosity and exploitation, highlighting the negative consequences of both. There was an underlying sense of uncertainty and doubt in her descriptions of interactions with non-refugees. She seemed to question the reasoning behind their actions and their collective values, even though some of them did help refugees. This reflects the resistance of refugees to fully perceive themselves as integral members of society, based on how they perceive the interactions between the two populations (Brubaker 2010). A similar narrative focus, with an emphasis on the dangers connected with the conduct of non-refugees, also characterised the testimony of Leon, Demetra's husband. Unlike Demetra, however, Leon did not limit his narrative to the immediate period following displacement but spoke of exploitation and unfairness more generally.

> *They let them get rich at the expense of refugees. And that is why I say there was no even distribution of damages. Was I at fault and the person from Limassol or Larnaca or Nicosia wasn't? (...) There was a war and 200,000 people left their homes and for them, no consequences. And you would go to buy a plot of land and they would ask for outrageous money. They took advantage of refugees, these people on this side.*

Leon's perception of exploitation stemmed from his belief in an unequal distribution of damages among the Greek-Cypriot population after the invasion. He contested that, while some individuals had suffered greatly, others had not suffered at all. Furthermore, he expressed the view that refugees were exploited by residents in the south when it came to purchasing land. This claim is supported by Georgiades' study (2009), which found that participants reported feeling exploited and treated as second-class citizens due to the inflated prices of properties. The notion of being treated as second-class citizens encapsulates the experiences of Demetra and Leon, as their accounts of interactions between refugees and non-refugees reflect a belief in an unfair and prejudiced treatment. The added element of exploitation in the context of land transactions further emphasises the sense of injustice in these circumstances.

Developing belonging

Aphrodite was in her early 20s when the invasion occurred. Following the war, she married Andreas, a local from the village where her family resettled. Both Aphrodite and Andreas had successful careers and were able to build a house in the village, as well as acquire an apartment in Nicosia and a seaside holiday retreat. While Andreas passed away in 2015, Aphrodite still resides in the village, despite her sisters urging her to move to Nicosia to be closer to them. Of particular relevance to this paper is a section in Aphrodite's account where she described the reaction of the village community to her marriage, specifically focusing on the gossip and disapproval expressed by elderly female villagers regarding Andreas' choice to marry a refugee.

> *Me, Andreas took me as his wife. It was a village and they were saying to my mother-in-law: 'You took in the refugee and she has nothing'. And my mother-in-law was listening to them. And they told her: 'They won't give you land so you can build'. Andreas already owned land for a house, his own. 'They won't give you help so you can build'. And my mother-in-law responded to them. You know, these old grandmothers who sit in alleys and gossip. My mother-in-law responded: 'If they do not give her, we will build the house'.*

There are three possible interpretations of the way Aphrodite presented the gossiping of the elderly villagers regarding her marriage. The first interpretation views the gossiping as a form of defamation aimed at Aphrodite's family, highlighting their perceived failure to meet the cultural expectations of providing a dowry house for the newly married couple. The villagers perceived this failure as putting Andreas' family at a disadvantage. In this reading, the gossiping serves as an affirmation of the values prevalent in rural Cyprus (Loizos 1981) and as a critique of Aphrodite's family for not adhering to the established norms. It also establishes a symbolic boundary that separates the village community and asserts the undesirability of intermarriage between refugees and villagers due to the perceived inability of refugees to conform to the accepted cultural norms (Zinovieff 1991).

The second interpretation of Aphrodite's narrative emphasises the performative aspect of the gossiping which, along with its content, defined the boundaries of the village community. In this reading, it is noted that outsiders like Aphrodite were unable to engage in gossiping due to their lack of knowledge and experience of social life in the village (Zinovieff 1991). While her marriage to Andreas was the subject of the gossiping, Aphrodite herself was only able to narrate it through the perspective of her mother-in-law, as she did not have

the ‘right’ to participate in the gossiping. Therefore, gossiping, both as a performative act and in its content, served to delineate membership within the group, distinguishing between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’.

The third interpretation of Aphrodite’s narrative presents a contradictory perspective to the previous two interpretations but it is also the most critical. In the closing remarks of her narration, Aphrodite justifies the gossiping, acknowledging that, while it defamed her family and discriminated against her, it was also a common aspect of village culture. This understanding of gossiping differs from the previous interpretations, as it removes the notion of devious criticism and scandalisation, while still acknowledging it as a form of moral judgement. In this reading, Aphrodite recognises gossiping as a normal element of village culture, akin to a form of ‘social poetics’ where meaning is created through casual interactions in a social context (Herzfeld 1991). She appears to accept the women’s gossiping as an ordinary part of village life, almost ‘defending’ them against potential criticism. By assuming an instructive tone in her remarks, Aphrodite indicated that she expected the listener to adopt this understanding of gossiping as well.

This last interpretation holds significant importance, as it takes into account her personal history within village X. This village is where she was married, raised her son and continues to reside, even after the passing of her husband. Throughout their marriage, she received support from Andreas’ family and relatives. This emotional connection and support from the village community is evident in her decision to remain there, despite the absence of her own relatives. These biographical details suggest that Aphrodite has developed a certain level of emotional attachment and involvement in the community.

This emotional bond helps to explain the overall tone and narrative approach which Aphrodite took in recounting her experiences. She strove to position herself as a member of the village community while remaining true to her refugee background. While she acknowledged the tensions between refugees and non-refugees, she avoided assigning blame, recognising, instead, the inevitability of friction due to the fundamental alteration of the social environment. Aphrodite’s narrative reconstruction can be seen as evidence of an evolving belonging within the community. Unlike her sisters, who attributed blame to non-refugees for their treatment of refugees, Aphrodite reconstructs the gossiping episode in a way that mitigates the discrimination she experienced and absolves any culpability associated with gossiping as an ‘ordinary element of village life’. This approach highlights her attempt to bridge the divide between her refugee identity and her desire for acceptance within the community.

Aphrodite’s life story sheds light on the significant role that familial relationships between refugees and non-refugees play in shaping social connections within a community. This point is particularly highlighted in her testimony when she discusses her son’s experiences growing up in the village. According to Aphrodite, ‘(…) he was not considered a refugee, as his father was not a refugee… The population was already starting to integrate, particularly us that we were not both refugees. One of his parents was native so he was not affected’. The fact that her son had a parent who was not a refugee is understood as facilitating his integration into the community. Due to his ‘mixed origins’, he was not perceived as an ‘outsider’ nor did he feel like one. This observation supports the argument that familial affiliations are crucial in establishing stronger social connections between refugees and non-refugees. It also suggests that, even in the early 2000s, there was still some stigma associated with being a refugee, although Aphrodite’s son did not personally experience it.

An indicator-oriented concept of integration and Greek-Cypriot internal displacement

The oral histories presented above provide insights into the interactions between Greek-Cypriot refugees and the non-refugee population following the 1974 Turkish invasion. These accounts depict a range of experiences and demonstrate how the narrators perceive and interpret these interactions in their own unique ways. When considering these accounts in relation to other observable aspects of the Greek-Cypriot experience of internal

displacement, several factors come into play. How do these accounts concerning the interaction between the two populations relate to other observable aspects of the Greek-Cypriot experience of internal displacement – such as a common ethnicity, government social provisions and citizenship status for those displaced? What do these accounts tell us in relation to the refugees' efforts towards (re)settlement and their belonging in Greek-Cypriot society?

Seeking to address the aforementioned questions and to bring together the different characteristics of the Greek-Cypriot experience of internal displacement, I encountered Ager and Strang's (2008, 2010) theory of refugee integration. Their 'mid-level' theory is amongst the most cited works dealing with refugee and displaced persons and has been applied in numerous research studies worldwide, including those examining mass displacement in Eastern Europe (see, for example, Alencar 2018; Alessi *et al*. 2020; Platts-Fowler and Robinson 2015). The model encompasses four domains: a) markers and means of integration such as education, employment, housing and health; b) foundational principles such as rights and citizenship; c) facilitators of integration such as language, cultural knowledge and safety; and d) the social connections which refugees establish in the host society with formal institutions, members of the dominant group and their own intra-group ties. As Ager and Strang (2008) note, the domains of facilitators and social connections mediate between the foundational principles of citizenship and rights and the public outcomes in housing, education and employment.

Applying these domains to the case of Greek-Cypriot internal displacement may appear complex, given the ongoing and unresolved conflict that Cypriots have been living with for approximately 50 years (Bryant and Papadakis 2012). However, undertaking such an analysis can provide valuable insights into how relationships between different populations in war-torn countries impact on the resettlement and adjustment of those who have been displaced. To this end, Greek-Cypriot refugees share a common culture, religion and ethnicity with the non-refugee population, which can be seen as a facilitator for their integration. Furthermore, their retention of full citizenship rights in their country aligns with the foundational principles and citizenship indicator in Ager and Strang's model. Additionally, the refugee population has benefited from various governmental social provisions that guaranteed rights such as housing, employment and welfare. The oral histories presented in this paper can be connected, in turn, to the domain of social connections and the different types of relationship between the two populations. As such, while Aphrodite's account indicated a willingness to be seen as a member of her village's community, the negative experiences described by Penelope and Demetra suggested issues in the establishment of social connections between refugees and non-refugees. Does this mean that Penelope and Demetra remain 'unintegrated' while Aphrodite has 'accomplished integration'? Furthermore, what do these accounts tell us in relation to an important characteristic of internal displacement such as common ethnicity?

The first question is connected to one of the most important criticisms of indicator-oriented concepts of integration and pertains to the way in which scholarly research tends to use the term 'integration' as both an analytical concept and an empirical indication, thereby conflating categories of analysis and experience (Spencer and Charsley 2021). However, using the concept as both an analytical concept and an empirical indication neglects the fact that integration – or the development of a feeling of belonging – is a process rather than an end. For a proper designation of a person's efforts to resettle, then, research should recognise the variations in results that these efforts can yield, rather than denote a normative condition. In the case of the accounts presented above, we cannot claim that Aphrodite is integrated while her sisters are not; instead, the data suggest a clearer development of a feeling of social inclusion and belonging in Aphrodite's narrative compared to those of her sisters. This consideration regarding the parallel usage of the term 'integration' is something upon which scholarly research should also reflect in their analyses of contemporary internal displacements in Central and Eastern Europe, as scholarship already employs the term in both of its uses,

blurring the actual experiences of those displaced with an idealised state of belonging (Pikulicka-Wilczewska and Uehling 2017; Sasse 2020).

The second question pertains to an aspect of integration literature that can have significant implications, particularly in cases of internal displacement. More specifically, the integration literature often assumes homogenised notions of national belonging, a phenomenon known as methodological nationalism (Anthias and Pajnik 2014). However, in cases of internal displacement, this assumption takes on an interesting twist. It is often believed, particularly by policy-makers, that integration for internally displaced individuals will be 'natural' since they are already 'homogenised' with non-refugees (Harrell-Bond and Voutira 1992). As we have seen from the oral histories in this paper, however, an indicator such as a common ethnicity between refugees and the local population may not be sufficient to ensure a sense of social inclusion and belonging and can even result in negative perceptions of interactions with non-refugees. This aspect has already been acknowledged and discussed in the literature on Ukrainian internal displacement, where authors have identified various layers of 'our-ness' in how the non-displaced population perceives different displaced populations based on their origin, such as whether they are from Donbass or Crimea (Bulakh 2020).

The limitations of the Ager and Strang's integration model in the context of Greek-Cypriot internal displacement raise the following questions: Is it redundant to discuss integration when examining cases of internal displacement? What is the broader role of the concept of integration in migration research? In answering the first question, we must first acknowledge the context in which Ager and Strang developed their model (refugees in Scotland) but, at the same time, we must question its applicability to *all* cases of displacement. In discussing internal displacement, the analysis of the paper suggested that relying solely on a common ethnicity as an indicator cannot guarantee integration or the development of belonging for those displaced. In fact, the paper demonstrates that the voices of the internally displaced can even challenge the importance of a shared ethnicity.

Regarding the second question, some authors have proposed completely abandoning the concept of integration (Schinkel 2018), while others argue for more critical reflection in its usage (Dahinden 2016; Spencer and Charsley 2021). There are also authors who suggest that integration should be seen as a property of the system rather than of the individual migrant or refugee (Ferris and Donato 2020). Regardless of one's stance on this matter, it is crucial for migration research to further explore and examine the concept of integration, delving into additional issues and intersecting themes and topics, as this special section has aimed to do.

Conclusion: the role of narrative in the experience of displacement

By way of conclusion, I would like to highlight the significance of oral history and narrative in the study of refugees and displaced persons and their experiences. Writing in relation to German expellees in Canada, Andreas Kintzmann (2011) contends that law is able to provide only a false closure to survivors; by itself, law is incapable of bringing about reconciliation. This argument can also be applied to the case of displaced persons and their pursuit of integration and social inclusion, where the mere attainment of integration indicators may not necessarily lead to a genuine sense of belonging. This observation aligns with the views of Zetter (1991), who argues that normative policy assumptions often overlook what truly matters to displaced persons. Instead, these assumptions often result in a process of labelling and the construction of a bureaucratic/legal identity that diminishes the individuality of refugees and obscures their subjective experiences.

In the case of Greek-Cypriot refugees, an impartial observer might argue that they are well integrated into Greek-Cypriot society as a whole. Many refugees have even achieved remarkable success and prosperity, reflecting the overall affluence of Cypriot society since 1974. Nevertheless, the narratives presented in this

paper have unveiled underlying issues regarding the level of social inclusion that would otherwise have remained concealed. These narratives reveal bitterness towards the treatment of refugees by non-refugees and uncertainty about whether the former have truly been accepted. At the same time, they confirm that the development of social inclusion is an ongoing process rather than a fixed outcome.

Therefore, what the paper wishes to call attention to is the importance of narrative for the sake of refugees and displaced persons themselves. The oral histories presented herein do not intend to identify a 'right' or a 'wrong' nature of interaction; if anything, Aphrodite's account demonstrates that such a binary distinction does not exist. Instead, narratives allow displaced individuals to express their own perspectives and unravel their subjectivities and experiences on the historical record. Through this process of unravelling, essential information emerges, shedding light on various aspects of their lives. This information is crucial for understanding the intricate and multifaceted nature of displacement.

Notes

1. Having clarified the usage of the term 'refugees' to describe Greek-Cypriot displacement, the paper will henceforth be using the term without apostrophes.
2. Similar types of experience were recorded in high schools in Limassol and Larnaca even until the 2010s.
3. Ares' village had a large Turkish-Cypriot community prior to 1974 and many Greek-Cypriot refugee families resettled in houses there. This resettlement altered the demographics of the village.

Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the Author.

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Volunteering as a Means of Fostering Integration and Intercultural Relations. Evidence from Six European Contexts

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Migrant integration remains a continuous challenge in many EU countries, as shown by the retreat from multiculturalism and the concerns regarding Muslim migrants. In recent years, the increase in asylum-seekers has added further complexities to the issue. Meanwhile, volunteering is considered to be an important aspect of today's society and a thermometer of civic well-being. Bringing together the field of migration studies and research on volunteering, we investigate whether volunteering would foster processes of integration and intercultural relations. We do so by presenting an innovative empirical study based on interviews and self-administered questionnaires conducted at two points in time over a period of about a year in a specific setting that brought together EU and third-country nationals in volunteering activities in six European contexts. Thus, we are able to provide an in-depth account of volunteering experiences and their effects on intercultural relations and processes of integration. The research highlights how volunteering fosters social interactions, intersecting with dynamics of inclusion. It is a valuable tool that strengthens the community as well as the process of social integration, helping to overcome the tensions and conflicts that persist in European societies. At the same time, we argue that volunteering cannot make up for all integration challenges since the process of societal integration requires a more comprehensive approach which includes tackling discrimination in structural integration.

Keywords: migrants, volunteering, youth, integration, intercultural understanding, belonging

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Introduction

Migrant integration remains a continuous challenge in many EU countries, as shown by the retreat from multiculturalism and concerns regarding Muslim migrants. In recent years, the increase in the number of asylum-seekers has added further complexities to the issue. Integration is, indeed, a highly challenged and much-criticised term. If it is true that, in most immigration societies, there are certain ideas about how migrants are to be incorporated into society, what this process should look like in concrete terms and what is meant by the term integration, however, is diverse, undecided, often contradictory and dependent on the respective social and political situation. In this context, this paper contributes to the understanding of processes of integration, adopting a bottom-up perspective that focuses on the micro-level and individuals' experiences. In particular, we address processes of integration, looking at the social interactions and intercultural understanding between young people with and without a migrant background that occur through volunteering.

Volunteering is considered to be an important aspect of today's society and a thermometer of a society's civic well-being (Bedford 2015: 464). Thus, volunteerism is supported by many European countries as well as EU institutions; indeed, it is estimated that around one third of EU citizens take part in some form of volunteering activity. Bringing together the field of migration studies and research on volunteering, we look at volunteering as one piece in the broader puzzle of the process of integration. We investigate whether and to what extent volunteering would foster processes of social integration and intercultural relations. Could volunteering facilitate community-building and bring young people – both with and without a migrant background – closer together? Could volunteering help people to feel part of a community and foster intercultural understanding and relations? What are the effects of volunteering experiences on interpersonal contacts, senses of belonging and processes of empowerment? Addressing these questions, our analysis highlights how volunteering is a form of positive social interaction, that intersects with dynamics of inclusion and helps to overcome the tensions, conflicts and problems that persist in European societies.

We analyse the experience of a group of 30 young people (aged 18–27), composed of EU and third-country nationals, who were selected to carry out volunteering activities in the realms of creative arts/culture and/or sports in six European contexts (Vienna/Austria, Rotterdam/the Netherlands, Zagreb/Croatia, Slovenia, Glasgow/Scotland and the Italian province of South Tyrol).[1] In this way, we aim to provide an in-depth account of volunteering experiences, focusing on their effects on the participants' intercultural understanding and relations, interpersonal contacts, sense of belonging and processes of empowerment. The analysis is based on data collected through self-administered online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with the group of volunteers, conducted in two phases both prior to and towards the end of the volunteering experience. The volunteers carried out volunteering activities, in mixed-gender and intercultural settings in the framework of a volunteering association, for almost a year.[2] Scholarship on volunteering/migrant volunteering rarely relies on this type of research design, preferring large surveys and/or analysis conducted at a single point in time.

It should be noted that the analysis involves a variety of geographical contexts, representing a microcosm of the EU. Thus, it is necessary to highlight the differences between these contexts in terms of migration and volunteering experience. Indeed, they range from countries with a long experience of migration (Rotterdam/Netherlands, Vienna/Austria) to areas that have started to deal with it only recently (Ljubljana/Slovenia and Zagreb/Croatia). Furthermore, in South Tyrol and Glasgow/Scotland, recent migration patterns intersect with the presence of national minorities or peripheral nationalism. In some cases, like South Tyrol and Vienna/Austria, volunteering is a more popular, more structured and regulated phenomenon. Finally, some volunteering activities took place in large cities such as Vienna and Rotterdam, whereas others were based in smaller urban contexts like Bolzano/Bozen in South Tyrol.[3] Before proceeding with the analysis, the next two sections delineate the theoretical approach and the methodology of the research.

At the intersection of integration and volunteering: Theoretical approach and state of the art

Though the understanding of migrant integration has evolved over time, it remains a contested concept. Early conceptual models of integration predominantly assumed a homogeneous majority society and a relationship between an 'us' and the 'them', with distinctions based on cultural, religious or ethnic affiliation or nationality. Thus, built on nation-state epistemologies that downplay hierarchical power relations, these models perceived differences and foresaw a straight-line process of adaptation of those defined as 'different' in order to produce a whole (Dahinden 2016). More recently, civic integration has become a fashionable concept which requires migrants to prove their willingness to integrate into the host society by, for example, taking language courses and classes on specific features of the country (see Goodman 2014). Alternative ideas on integration focus, instead, on the notion of diversity, reflecting the increasing social complexity in immigration societies resulting from manifold processes of social, cultural, religious and economic heterogenisation in a globalised world. The introduction of the term 'inclusion' as an alternative in the debate added to the complexity of the discussion but did not necessarily offer a solution. Both approaches – integration and inclusion – are concerned with the question of access to and participation in, *inter alia*, subsystems such as education, employment and housing. However, while integration places a stronger emphasis on the active participation of individuals, expecting them to have a desire to integrate, inclusion starts from the assumption that society is interested in ensuring it as kind of a societal obligation.

Though contested, rather than discharging or substituting the concept of integration, we argue in this contribution for the necessity to highlight the complexity and multifaceted aspects of processes of integration. Indeed, as long recognised, integration is not only a two-way process of mutual adaptation that involves two types of actor (the migrant individual and society at large)[4] but is also, as pointed out by Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas (2016), a multidimensional non-linear phenomenon. According to Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas (2016: 14–16), integration unfolds at different paces along three interrelated dimensions: the legal-political dimension, which concerns the recognition of migrants' residence and political rights; the socio-economic dimension, which pertains to migrants' access to socio-economic institutions such as the labour market, housing and education; and the cultural–religious dimension, which refers to the culture and customs of migrants and the host society and their intersection. Similarly, Heckmann and Schnapper (2009: 10) operationalise the concept of integration in terms of 'structural integration' (the acquisition of rights and access to core institutions) and 'cultural integration' (cognitive, cultural, behavioural and attitudinal change). In addition, the authors speak of 'social integration', which concerns the private sphere and private relationships (social relationships, friendship, weddings, voluntary associations and so on), whereas feelings of belonging and identification compose the 'identificational integration' (Heckmann and Schnapper 2009: 10; see also EFFNATIS 2001: 9).

Building on these insights, we consider integration as an open process that reflects the fact that societies are never 'finished and completed' but in constant transformation (Salat 2013: 137) – thus, how people form and become part of a society also changes over time. This process unfolds at the individual as well as at the societal level. The former involves, on the one hand, 'social integration', which concerns an individual's personal relations, social networks and civic and political engagement. On the other hand, individuals should enjoy 'structural integration' which implies that they are able to access key areas like housing and the labour market. At the societal level, the focus is on society at large. Integration implies the commitment by society to pursue 'social cohesion' with specific tools – such as the recognition of civic, political and social rights, anti-discriminatory measures, diversity and multicultural policies and the promotion of civic activities. These different aspects are complementary and interrelated; a socially integrated individual might still struggle in a disintegrated society where s/he suffers from structural discrimination. In other words, we argue for the individual's integration in

a society that is integrated; namely processes of integration should not be centred exclusively on the degree to which individuals become part of communities – society as a whole needs to be integrated.

Within this framework, we focus in this article on processes of integration at the individual level. In particular, we address individuals' experiences of integration at the micro level, focusing on volunteering activities. We trace how taking part in volunteering interacts with intercultural understanding and social relations between young people, both with and without a migrant background. Several studies have analysed the consequences of volunteering from different perspectives, e.g., measuring its economic value or considering its social, political and/or structural effects. Scholars have highlighted several benefits of volunteering, from enhancing mental and physical health, to strengthening self-esteem, increasing social contacts and gaining skills (e.g. Schmedemann 2009; Sherraden, Lough and McBride 2008). It has been noted how volunteering intersects with personal identity, people's relationship with society, sense of mattering and processes of empowerment (Piliavin 2010; Wilson 2012). Studies on the impact of volunteering refer in general to the contribution of volunteering to different forms of individuals' capital – i.e., human, cultural and social (Smith, Buckley, Bridges, Pavitt and Moss 2018; Smith, Ellis, Gaskin, Howlett and Stuart 2015). However, the extent of these benefits depends on the type of volunteering as well as on the specific features of the volunteer (Piliavin 2010).

On the other hand, research on the interplay between volunteering and migration has produced manifold and, to some extent, ambivalent scientific findings. Indeed, the relationship between volunteering and migration has often been seen in problematic terms because the presence of migrants has been blamed for eroding social cohesion; erosion which, in turn, reduces the willingness of people to volunteer. Furthermore, migrants appear to be less involved in volunteerism, though their participation increases with the length of their residency; scholars have pointed out various factors hindering migrants' decision to volunteer, such as a lack of language proficiency and cultural heritage and bureaucratic barriers (Khvorostianov and Remennick 2017; Manatschal 2015; Voicu 2014). Finally, there is a tendency to see migrants mainly as passive recipients of volunteering activities (Ambrosini 2020: 11); alternatively, some scholars have criticised volunteering by migrants as a form of free work through which people have to prove their commitment to integrating, which has a negative connotation (Pasqualetto 2017).

More positive perspectives on the interplay between volunteering and migration come from those scholars who call for the focus to be on migrants' active volunteering experiences, which is considered as a form of active citizenship that fosters confidence and relieves social marginality (Ambrosini 2020; Slootjes and Kampen 2017). From this perspective, citizenship is not just the recognition of a juridical status from above but, rather, a process – or better, a social practice – through which people acquire rights, access to services, skills and recognition (Erminio 2022). Volunteering is an act of practicing such 'citizenship from below', which signals individuals' social competences and relations and their contribution to and participation in society (Ambrosini and Baglioni 2022: 16). In this regard, volunteering by migrants is seen as an indicator of their successful integration. Volunteering can provide several benefits to migrants, like lessening labour-market discrimination (Ambrosini 2020: 17; Baert and Vujić 2016). In particular, as pointed out by Handy and Greenspan (2009), volunteering can attenuate the negative effects of the migration experience, fostering the social and human capital lost in the relocation process. Indeed, research shows that, among the reasons why migrants volunteer, gaining a foothold in the new place, socialising and enhancing their self-esteem and their skills all play an important role (Cattacin and Domenig 2014). Thus, volunteering can act as 'a path leading to gradual social inclusion' (Khvorostianov and Remennick 2017: 353). Building on these insights, this paper intends to contribute to the understanding of the role that youth volunteering plays as a tool to strengthen the community and sustain social integration.

Methodology: Pre- and post-measurements through interviews and questionnaires

This analysis is centred on the micro-level experience of a group of young adults, both with and without a migrant background, who volunteered with an association in the field of sport or creative art/culture in mixed gender and intercultural settings. The research adopted a holistic and temporal perspective in order to grasp the complexity of volunteering and its role on young adults' intercultural understanding and relations, interpersonal contacts, sense of belonging and processes of empowerment (Hardill, Baines and 6 2007: 401). To assess and measure the effects of volunteering experiences, we used mixed techniques for gathering data, combining self-administered online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with the volunteers who participated in the research.[5] The interviews were given a more prominent role in the analysis. The questionnaires and interviews were first conducted between May and June 2019, before the beginning of the volunteering activity, whereas the second phase of data collection took place from March to April 2020, towards the end of their volunteering experience and at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Because of this latter and the related lockdown measures implemented in various countries, the second wave took place mostly online, without any physical interaction.[6]

Both the interviews and the online questionnaire addressed issues related to the volunteering experience, interpersonal relations, sense of belonging and empowerment, lasting 45 to 80 minutes and 10 minutes respectively. In the second phase of data collection, questions were included on the participants' subjective view of the perceived effects of their volunteering experience.[7] Interviews allowed the researchers to delve into people's feelings of belonging and their perception of being or not being part of a community and any potential changes in their networks of friends and social contacts. In this regard, a social mapping exercise was used as an analytical tool in order to trace people's social networks (Greene and Hogan 2005). The first and second interviews were then summarised and coded – using the computer-based analysis programme Atlas.ti – and examined by applying thematic analysis (Nowell, Norris, White and Moules 2017). The questionnaires were developed with tested item batteries from established quantitative research and provided hints on changes over time and the extent of such changes. The questionnaire datasets of both waves were merged and analysed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 25 software and disaggregating the data by gender, EU/non-EU origin and the intensity of volunteering engagement. Both interviews and questionnaires were anonymised using an ID code. The data from the questionnaires and interviews were combined by triangulating the results.[8]

The group of 30 young adults involved in the research included 17 EU citizens (EUN) (two of whom were born in a non-EU country) and 13 third-country nationals (TCN) with various legal statuses and lengths of residency in the country and born in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia and Turkey. The group of volunteers was composed with an eye to respecting the gender balance – with a prevalence of 18 women – and reflected different levels of education and social class.[9] Of the 30 young adults, three were volunteers in Glasgow/Scotland, four in Rotterdam/the Netherlands, five volunteers each in Slovenia and Zagreb/Croatia, six volunteers in Vienna/Austria and seven in South Tyrol. In these six contexts, they engaged in formal volunteering, defined as an activity carried out through an association or organisation willingly and without being forced or paid to do so (except for the reimbursement of expenses). It should be noted that most of the participants had already been engaged with volunteering associations in several fields and in various roles, including administrative tasks, teaching and translating, in sectors such as humanitarian aid, music and sport.

For the purpose of this research, the volunteers collaborated with associations involved in the field of sport or creative art and culture, which provided a volunteering experience in gender-mixed and intercultural settings. Many of the associations represented a bridging form of volunteering, which 'targets members of

other social and ethnic groups' (Khvorostianov and Remennick 2017: 338) *and* some of them addressed issues related to cultural diversity.

The volunteers engaged in volunteering activities with varying degrees of commitment, ranging from a few hours every day, one day a week or a few times a month to an occasional engagement. Indeed, some needed time to find a suitable volunteer position, had to change their voluntary role and organisation or had to interrupt their volunteering engagement for personal reasons or due to time limitations encountered in the course of the project. Over a period of about a year, each of them spent on average 52 hours volunteering. Three out of four volunteers were involved on a regular basis, weekly or monthly, with an average duration of involvement of seven months, whereas seven participants volunteered for four months or less.

Volunteering roles and activities varied between the participants and were decided in collaboration with the volunteers, the associations and the researchers, based on the individual's personal skills, interests and time constraints. Activities ranged from training football (soccer) teams to collaborating in theatre performances, planning events and teaching circus skills to children, with fluent transitions between roles. It should be noted that, with the unfolding of the Covid-19 pandemic, volunteering activities were changed and adapted to the new conditions – by switching to online mode – or were ultimately stopped.

Empirical findings

In what follows, we examine the issue of whether these volunteering experiences offer the opportunity to promote social integration. Based on the responses of the 30 participants, we look in detail at the development of intercultural exchange and personal networks as well as the sense of belonging in the intercultural settings created in the various sites. Finally, we look at whether and how volunteering has influenced personal skills and empowerment. In practical terms, we proceed in the following manner: as an introduction, we start with an overview of the results from the self-administered online questionnaires. In the next step, we present the results from the qualitative in-depth interviews in each section. Here, we zoom into the statements of our participants, so to speak, in order to gain a fuller understanding of the different dimensions of social integration.

Volunteering and intercultural understanding

The results of the self-administered questionnaires show that the participants became more accustomed to dealing with cultural diversity during their voluntary engagement. The majority of the volunteers (25), regardless of gender or nationality, noted that their relationship with other cultures and their experiences in encountering difference changed positively whereas, for the remaining five persons, it did not change at all. No participant stated that the relationship with other cultures had changed in a negative way during volunteering.

Obviously, the social encounters within the volunteering context allowed the participants to reflect on their own cultural habits and self-perceptions and to learn through personal exchanges and active listening about the points of view of persons with a different background. For example, as pointed out by a volunteer with a migrant background in Rotterdam, interactions during volunteering made her wonder 'why people act the way they do, why they are different to me in what way' and made her more aware of the Dutch customs she had unconsciously acquired. In addition to learning about other customs, cultures and traditions and how to deal with differences, volunteers highlighted the pronounced similarities with their counterparts since, as youth, they often share common goals and interests and experience similar life events. Thus, a volunteer in Croatia mentioned how she has only now realised how culturally similar she is to people of Bosnian descent.

Thus, the interactions during the volunteering activity helped people to recognise their intermediate status between different cultures, allowing some of them draw the best from each.

A young woman of Armenian descent, born and raised in Turkey and who volunteered in Slovenia, explains how shared goals and activities in a multicultural setting made her feel quite comfortable and how she enjoyed this experience:

> *The team was me and two other volunteers – one from Turkey, one from Spain. One was helping in culinary tasks, in the kitchen; one was putting on cultural events and assisting, helping, like me. And the rest of the team was from Zimbabwe, Nigeria, India and Algeria. So, it was a very mixed space (...) and of course Slovenian. It was mixed and we were getting along so well. And we were not feeling any different, really. It was so nice actually.*

Concrete contacts in the volunteering environment offer the possibility to actually learn about the personal stories and hardships of, for example, refugees. At the same time, the potential tensions between the similarities and differences resulting from the mix of cultural backgrounds may come to the fore. These are well reflected in a statement by an Austrian volunteer who was born and raised in Vienna:

> *So, what it means to be a refugee and to be repressed or expelled, is something that I could not have imagined before. And I mean, I would not say that I can imagine it now either, but at least now I certainly have a better insight. That has nothing to do with culture* per se. *Interculturally, I think, on the one hand, what has been confirmed for me is that the differences between people are not so big – whatever culture they come from – and, on the other, my understanding has its limits. For example, when we talk about things such as not letting girls play football (...) it depends on how you define understanding but I don't think that that is okay; I lack understanding on the one hand and, on the other, I understand now where they* [participants with a refugee background] *come from, better.*

The quote provides a more nuanced picture of the issue of how diversity and cultural differences can be negotiated in the context of joint activities. Though this volunteer is not ready to agree that women should not play football, he at least tries to understand the reasons why, in other cultures, this view is widespread.

The volunteering experience helped some participants to rethink their stance regarding intercultural cooperation. In that vein, a female volunteer in Glasgow, of Nigerian descent, stated that.

> *I never knew I could enjoy working in a team. Then I knew I could enjoy going... with, like, new people from different countries and all that stuff. So, it's made me realise that maybe I actually love, you know, to be really open to all those culture(s) and I never realised that but now I do.*

Though most volunteers reported an increase in intercultural understanding, the specific context and the related opportunity structures affected volunteers' experiences. Indeed, from the interviews, different levels of familiarity with diversity and intercultural relations emerged. For volunteers who live in superdiverse cities like Rotterdam, Glasgow or Vienna, multiculturalism and intercultural relations were seen as the norm in their daily life as well as during volunteering; however, at the same time, volunteers in Vienna highlighted how migrants and refugees are actually on the margins of society. In a more positive direction, a volunteer in Rotterdam pointed out that

> *Rotterdam is a multicultural city. The volunteering place really mirrors that (...) Every time you enter it, you encounter different cultures... It is normal, that just happens here (...) we just know how to deal with each other and different cultures. That is the fun (...) That creates the mood at* [the volunteering place]. *I find that very positive. We are rich in that sense. In that sense, I notice it, in a positive way. But it is not remarkable to me.*

In contrast, in countries with less experience of migration-related diversity, such as Croatia and Slovenia, volunteers pointed to a different scenario. In particular, volunteers in Croatia stressed the presence of tensions between the majority of the population and minorities, especially Roma and Muslim minorities.

Volunteering and interpersonal relations

Engaging in volunteering activities can be an opportunity to increase a person's social networks, to meet people and to make new acquaintances and friends. In the questionnaires, we asked the participants whether or not they had gained new friends through volunteering and whether they think that these friendships will last beyond the voluntary engagement. The majority (24 of the 30 volunteers) indeed met people with the prospect of lasting friendships. Participants with a migrant background appear to be more optimistic in this respect, with seven of them indicating that they are quite sure that they have made new friends.

However, as emerged in the qualitative interviews, personal characteristics determine the social relations developed during the volunteering experience. In this regard, our participants can be divided into two groups. Those volunteers who were already socially highly active persons and engage in various social circles are not necessarily in need of establishing new ties, even though they did so. More-insular persons who find meeting new people and interacting with strangers quite difficult, appreciated the setting of the volunteering experience and associations since it facilitates social interactions. In particular, male third-country nationals seem to have benefited from the volunteering experience by gaining new friendships. Indeed, only six of the 30 volunteers did not spend time with their fellow volunteers outside the volunteering associations, while six of the eight male TCN participants met up with many people they had known through volunteering, apart from their actual activity.

In the qualitative interviews we found examples of volunteering as an occasion to develop various types of social relationship, some of which can be perceived as deep as family ties, as a female volunteer in Austria who was born in Iran remarked:

> *(...) Not that we are just a soccer group and that we meet and train every week, or twice a week but it is like a family. There are also exchanges between the coaches and players, we exchange opinions, we exchange memories or, now, especially in this corona crisis, especially the problems we have or everything, just everything.*

Other participants discussed the issues of time and space, arguing that the volunteering activity is one among many other spheres of encounter and activity, which leaves them to restrict the volunteering contacts to this sphere in particular. A female volunteer in Rotterdam whose parents came from Surinam explains:

> *I always see them there and you have these deep conversations, which you do not have with just anyone. But these* [people] *are not necessarily friends that I am in touch with every day, but people who you share these conversations with, which you appreciate very much.*

For asylum-seekers who find themselves in a completely new environment and who often lack social contacts, volunteering offered the opportunity to deepen their friendships and to find someone to share problems with, as the following example from South Tyrol shows:

> *I met XY* [there]. *I knew him before, when we arrived in Italy you know, we arrived on the same day. But we were not as close before as we are now. Yeah, before Volpower we were (just) friends, playing soccer together, but now we are really friends and we tell each other things (...). Now, if I had something in Italy, at work or so (...) the first person I talk to would be him. It used to be my uncle or ZZ but now it's him.*

Nevertheless, this asylum-seeker from Nigeria has a small circle of friends and describes himself as extremely shy. However, he argues that the voluntary engagement helped him to relate to other people, which also improved his relations with his colleagues at work.

Volunteering and a sense of belonging

In the self-administered questionnaires, we asked the participants to assess, in a very generalised way, changes in their sense of belonging to the country in which they reside. The question is whether or not the volunteering experience had any impact in this respect. Among the 30 participants, no-one actually reported a negative change. There are remarkable differences depending on the migration background: among the 15 participants with a migration background, the sense of belonging has developed in a positive way for nine of them, whereas non-migrants display more or less the reverse pattern, with the majority (again, nine out of 15) reporting no changes in their sense of belonging. This suggests that a voluntary engagement can have a positive effect on the sense of belonging, especially for newcomers. In addition, we were interested in other dimensions of belonging and again asked about them both before and after volunteering. This exercise revealed a more nuanced picture. Most of the volunteers confirmed that they had a high level of close bonds with family and friends, feelings of inclusion when with other people and, though slightly less strong, feelings of connection with and acceptance by others. On the other hand, there was at the same time a slight increase in the number of volunteers who claimed that they felt like an outsider, as a stranger, when together with other people, isolated from the rest of the world and not being considered by other people. However, it should be kept in mind that the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown measures applied in many countries might have affected both people's mood and the results of the second wave of the questionnaire, most notably the issues related to social isolation.

By favouring social interactions, the volunteering experience has impacted on people's sense of belonging, inducing volunteers to renegotiate such feelings. Indeed, many volunteers point out that, through volunteering, they developed a feeling of being part of a community. However, the extent of this feeling varies since volunteers note spatial and temporal factors affecting their attachment to and involvement in the volunteering community. For example, whereas a participant, after increasing his volunteering commitment, stresses that 'I really am part of the community now (…) I realise I see it more as a second home than just a place where you are sometimes', another volunteer from Vienna speaks of a 'temporary community' in regard to her volunteering circle: 'Well, it's a community, definitely, but it's what I would call a temporary community. So again and again, suddenly, full of community and then, again, fully away'.

In this vein, the volunteering sphere indeed only plays a small part in the lives of the participants, while for some it is very important and made a great deal of difference – also in regard to belonging and feelings of being included. Others expressed a more negative assessment, like this young woman originating from Turkey and volunteering in Slovenia. She argues that there are spheres of a strong sense of belonging – as in her

workplace – but also spheres of exclusion, like discriminative attitudes towards people of colour in public places.

> *I mean... I lived as a volunteer here, so what I felt… I do not feel excluded but not super-included. Because if you say 'belonging', I don't think that I belong, I don't feel I belong, but it doesn't mean that I can't stay here… As I said, I have a life here, so I feel I don't need to be 100 per cent included to stay in a place.*

Moreover, some volunteers express attachment to the places visited during the volunteering experience which helps them to build relationships and memories and which strengthens their sense of belonging, as can be seen from the statement of another volunteer in Vienna:

> *Like where we had a match or where we trained or where we met, and that now reminds me that I have a lot of good friends here that I can meet or talk to, and this city is all of us together. That gives me a good feeling when I think that I also belong to it.*

The last quote includes feelings of empowerment when the participant talks about Vienna being 'all of us together'. In the final section, we look into this notion in more detail.

Volunteering, skills and empowerment

Volunteering is an opportunity to take on new roles and, in this way, to acquire or improve personal skills. Interviewed volunteers highlighted the broad variety of skills which they had acquired during their volunteering engagement, both practical everyday skills as well as more specialised abilities. These range from organisational skills gained while collaborating in a theatre performance, to the communication skills necessary to participate in sporting activities, creative abilities developed in dancing or circomotricity activities and leading skills used to guide groups of people. For those who do not know the official local language well, volunteering also becomes an occasion to practice speaking it in an informal and more relaxed setting. This might also come in handy in other spheres – like looking for a job – or other situations related to spheres of structural integration.

Turning from skills to empowerment, in the self-administered questionnaire we operationalised this complex issue by posing questions on self-determination and decision-making processes. Skills and empowerment are, of course, highly interrelated with individual competences, enabling the individual empowerment processes of young adults. Feeling in charge of one's own life situation diminishes slightly when comparing the assessment in the questionnaires before and after the volunteering experience. One has again to keep in mind the beginning of the sometimes quite strict measures related to the Covid-19 pandemic around the time when the second wave of data collection was taking place. These events left many individuals – and not only young people – with a feeling of loss of control.

Nevertheless, the results of the qualitative interviews reveal that volunteering contributes to the empowerment of the participants, who point out that they have grown on a personal level by committing to and successfully pursuing a goal and showing perseverance even when the volunteering activity became difficult. Volunteering is a time-consuming choice that requires individuals to reflect on their priorities, become more aware of their own capacities and embark on new and challenging activities. As summarised by a volunteer active in Rotterdam, 'those are experiences that you take with you. I consider it a backpack that I take everywhere'.

Thus, volunteering is seen as a strategy enabling participants to work on their personal weaknesses and strengths, thus helping them to achieve their personal goals. The following quote by a participant in Rotterdam is proof of how empowering an activity may be, as young people need to leave their 'inner comfort zone' which might, at first, make them more vulnerable but which might, in the end, make them proud if they succeed, thus giving them more self-confidence:

> *To stand for something and speak up. To feel confident. To go for what you want. That sort of stuff. Dance is personal growth too. It goes hand in hand. The show is one thing but the classes as such, you show yourself, which is quite vulnerable. That alone is a big step. But if people look at you and you learn something new, that is what you must get over. That is what I have learned from dancing but also music and culture. You can also find me in music studios. Show a bit of yourself, be vulnerable. It is scary but also powerful. I think I learned to do that better. That obstacle becomes smaller every time the more you do it.*

Other participants discussed issues of courage and confidence in relation to building networks and making friends. A volunteer in Glasgow, to give one example, felt at first that others rejected her because of her skin colour; however, she realised that it was partly her own lack of courage in trying to make new friends. Volunteering gave her the confidence to approach others and join in with new activities.

Conclusions

Our analysis of the volunteering experience in intercultural settings by a group of young adults both with and without a migrant background sheds new light on the role that youth volunteering plays in society and, more specifically, on how it intersects with dynamics of inclusion and processes of integration. Indeed, through an innovative approach which combined self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews and foresaw pre- and post-measurements, the paper has provided an in-depth picture of formal volunteering and its effects, revealing how it influenced people's intercultural understanding, positively changing their perceptions of difference. Furthermore, volunteering affects individuals' network of social contacts, providing opportunities to develop new friendships, believed to last over time. This seems to be particularly relevant for vulnerable groups, like the male TCN participants, who might have limited social networks. In this way, volunteering experiences prompt people to renegotiate their sense of belonging, improving their access to the community in which they live, though with variations related to spatial and temporal factors. Finally, through volunteering, individuals might acquire new sets of skills and increase their feelings of empowerment by becoming more attentive to their weakness and strengths and achievement of goals. The different contexts and countries in which the volunteering activities took place does not seem to have played much of a role, though a few differences did emerge, for example in regard to how living in a superdiverse city affects the volunteering experience. However, it goes without saying that it is not possible to make broader generalisations or develop proper comparisons due to the limited number of participants. Further research is necessary to evaluate the role played by specific ambit and contextual factors in the intersection of volunteering and processes of integration.

To summarise, therefore, this contribution has highlighted the interaction between formal volunteerism and individuals' human, cultural and social capital, showing how it affects intercultural understanding and interpersonal contacts, a sense of belonging and skills and processes of empowerment. Thus, we point to the micro-experience of volunteering as an opportunity and a resource for social integration that fosters social intercultural interactions and sustains people's empowerment, helping people to navigate in their daily life.

Volunteering can be seen as a bottom-up beneficial and valuable device that strengthens society and its members as well as the process of migrant integration.

At the same time, the visibility of volunteers with a migrant background might help to change perceptions of migration and give a positive image of migrants – presenting them as 'one of us', as active citizens who contribute to society – rather than as a problem, as victims, as passive receivers of help or, worse, as a threat and as welfare abusers (Ambrosini 2020; Weng and Lee 2016). By favouring interactions and cultural exchanges among persons with different origins and cultural backgrounds, volunteering can support society in the process of its becoming more inclusive of people with different backgrounds.

However, we recognise that volunteering has its limits, since it cannot make up for all the integration challenges – such as those related to structural integration and the lack of social cohesion in society – for example, for being excluded or discriminated in other spheres of life, such as access to housing and the labour market or having a weak legal status. This point was clearly highlighted by a male volunteer, born in Eritrea, who arrived in Slovenia through the EU relocation scheme. He points out the difficulties in finding accommodation and how he gets rejected by the lessor when making a phone call: 'Every day I feel comfortable. But when I'm looking for a new apartment, it's hard. When I call, they cannot accept me… they ask "Where are you from?"' In a similar way, a volunteering experience does not encompass the complexity of people's sense of belonging. Indeed, how people negotiate belonging mirrors the different paces in the various dimensions of processes of integration. As emerged in our analysis, volunteering might have fostered feeling of inclusion in a specific social arena but people might still feel excluded in other settings. Mattes, Lehner, van Breugel and Reeger (2020) speak in this regard of 'bubbles of belonging' to capture this complex scenario of feelings of inclusion and exclusion in different spheres (see also Lehner, Mattes, van Breugel, Reeger and Scholten 2022). Yet, apart from such limits, our research has highlighted the extent to which volunteering can sustain people's social integration.

To conclude, we are aware of some of the limits of our study. In particular, the analysed volunteering experiences concern a specific form of volunteering which we, as researchers, have supported along the way. However, we believe that the analysis contributes to the understanding of processes of integration in general and of social integration in particular, stressing the role that youth volunteerism could play in this regard. Thus, we call for further policies and measures to support youth volunteering and volunteering associations, addressing the particular challenges that might hinder the involvement of young migrants in an always more diversifying European society.

Notes

1. Regarding participants in Scotland, the terms 'EU citizens' and 'third-country nationals' refer to the period before Brexit. In the case of South Tyrol participants volunteered in the provincial capital Bolzano/Bozen and few others surrounding towns. In the case of Slovenia, volunteering activities took place in Ljubljana and surrounding areas.
2. This volunteering experience was enriched with activities organised for the volunteers within the framework of the Volpower project, such as a social media workshop held in Zagreb.
3. More detailed information on each context can be found in Volpower (2021).
4. The European Commission has defined 'integration' as a 'dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States' (Commission of the European Communities 2005: 5). See also OSCE (2012).
5. The research design and data gathering in all settings had to comply with the respective national legal situation, as well as those set out by the research institutions participating in the Volpower project, the

EU research integrity and ethics guidelines and finally the 'Guidance Note – Research on Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Migrant Refugees' of the European Commission. Participants were informed about all steps in the project, had to give their informed consent and were guaranteed anonymity. Asylum-seekers and migrants were considered a particularly vulnerable group who needed strong safeguards in terms of research ethics. The procedures and safeguards followed in this project took this vulnerability into account and had been already approved as part of the project's award process.

6. In this regard, it is necessary to keep in mind how the specific situation might have affected some of the participants' answers in the second phase of data collection.
7. The questions in both the interview and the questionnaire avoided terms such as migrant, foreigner, national, EU nationals, third-country nationals, etc. as far as possible because of the different interpretations these terms might be given by different interviewees.
8. We used the traditional 'convergence model', which consists in the triangulation of the results of two datasets collected on the same phenomenon but using different techniques. The results were compared only in the interpretation phase to find convergences and contrasts. The data collection and subsequent analysis took place simultaneously but separately. The purpose of this model is formulating conclusions on a specific phenomenon, well corroborated by the use of more than one technique (see Creswell and Plano Clark 2007).
9. For privacy reasons, we do not provide any additional information on the study participants.

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Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Public Libraries and Spaces of Micro Connection in the Intercultural City

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Everyday spaces represent central platforms that provide opportunities for encounters marked by ethnic and cultural diversity, where transformations can be negotiated that rethink living together. The significance of these 'third places' has been extensively researched. Yet, some spaces such as public libraries continue to be largely overlooked by geographers. Public libraries also remain under-appreciated within wider society despite their obvious social functions. Central here is that public libraries can be understood as dynamic and 'lived spaces' that enable the emergence of transient connections and relationships. Such spaces are increasingly sparse within modern cities. This paper explores the potential of everyday spaces of encounter, specifically public libraries, to facilitate the unfolding of 'light' connections and relationships, nurturing more inclusive forms of urban togetherness and belonging in multi-ethnic societies and the significance that people attribute to these often mundane encounters and micro connections. In so doing, this paper combines findings from two research projects that investigate mixed or intercultural encounters in public libraries in Bremen (Germany) and Glasgow (Scotland).

Keywords: public libraries, intercultural encounters, micro connection, shared spaces, belonging, multi-ethnic societies

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Introduction

The city is a shared place, where ethnic and cultural diversity and multicultural living are increasingly regarded as everyday and 'commonplace' (Wessendorf 2014). Yet, cities are often also divided/dividing settings that are shaped by fragmentation, exclusions and parallel lives. Both trends are closely intertwined, with the tension between them posing new challenges for urban living as people continue to arrive, settle and live in Western cities. Accordingly, public discourse and policy debates continue to be interested in questions concerning which spaces the ethnic and culturally diverse city needs to thrive and whether there are spaces which can help to nurture more inclusive forms of living together. In this paper, I wish to draw attention to the relevance and value of a widely known yet seemingly underestimated urban space: the public library. Public libraries enable diverse practices, interactions and encounters to take place between people, with often-unforeseen consequences, that matter to a variety of groups in urban society. Specifically, I suggest that the modern city needs *connecting spaces* – ordinary social spaces that provide opportunities for encounters and connections to emerge between people – that foster progressive forms of urban togetherness, with the public library representing one of the crucial and increasingly sparse spaces of connection that exist in modern cities (Amin 2008; Low 2006).

Urban scholars have done significant work to accentuate the city as a site of 'throwntogetherness' (Massey 2005) that is characterised by a 'permanent disequilibrium' (Wilson 2016: 453) and the 'juxtaposition of difference' (Bennett, Crochane, Mohan and Neal 2016). This captures the city as *made from encounters* (Darling and Wilson 2016), instead of serving only as their backdrop, where connection and understanding meet tension and conflict. Everyday spaces represent central platforms that provide opportunities for encounters marked by diversity, where transformations can be negotiated that rethink living and being-in-the-world together (Oldenburg 1989). The significance of these 'third places' has been extensively researched. Yet, some public spaces such as public libraries have been largely overlooked by geographers, who have otherwise carefully studied public institutions, including schools (Duveneck 2018), prisons (Moran, Turner and Schliehe 2017) and asylums (Philo 2004). Emerging research has just recently begun to fill this gap (e.g. van Melik and Merry 2021; Hitchen 2019; Norcup 2017; Peterson 2017; Robinson 2020; Schloffel-Armstrong, Baker and Kearns 2021). Public libraries also remain under-appreciated within the wider society despite their obvious social functions (Aabø and Audunson 2012). This is surprising, given that public libraries are a central part of the urban social infrastructure (Klinenberg 2018). They serve as settings of 'articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings' (Massey 1991: 28) and represent critical spaces through which people can encounter difference in interactions with other people, ideas and knowledge, access information and build shared notions of belonging and social inclusion. This is particularly relevant in enabling more vulnerable and disadvantaged social groups, including migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, to develop a sense of social well-being and connectedness to others and their surroundings (Johnston and Audunson 2017; Kosciejew 2019).

Research suggests that public libraries can play an important role in processes of inclusion and settlement. Understanding inclusion as an everyday process taking place in 'ordinary' spaces of social relation and contact (Wessendorf and Phillimore 2018), public libraries – due to their diverse social and educational functions – emerge as critical platforms in the lives of many people but specifically in the lives of migrants and refugees. This is because public libraries can make inclusion processes 'less traumatic for immigrants and natives' (Varheim 2014: 68) by acting as 'welcoming places of refuge' (Kosciejew 2019: 90) and 'fostering community for all individuals', helping migrants and refugees to 'navigate the process of settlement into their new communities' (2019: 90). As people often have similar reasons for visiting libraries, contact between users can increase over time, allowing these groups to settle into and participate in the wider society. The literature on

conviviality emphasises how such social interaction may help to mediate and translate cultural differences, something which is particularly relevant for migrants (Meissner and Heil 2021). This can help to find ‘a mode of sociality that builds on difference rather than trying to erase or subjugate it’ (Heil 2015: 323) and to manage urban multicultural and precarious modes of living together (Amin 2012; Wise and Noble 2016). Moreover, public libraries offer critical opportunities for migrants to expand and diversify their forms of contact with other people through library programmes (Johnston 2016), building and maintaining intercultural contacts and diverse social networks in increasingly multi-ethnic societies.

Public libraries can also be understood as dynamic and ‘lived spaces’ (cf. Lefebvre 1974) that specifically enable the emergence of ‘light’ connections and relationships. Since most libraries are shared or mixed spaces that accommodate multiple activities and practices, encounters of differing form, depth and duration can unfold here: from fleeting, banal and temporary interactions to more-personal, intimate and profound exchanges, (un)known others experience new, repetitive or one-time contacts that can feel (un)comfortable and emotional. Important here is that encounters are often chaotic, ambiguous and open-ended, with often unpredictable outcomes (Wilson 2016). The encounter literature also cautions against romanticising encounters and their effects, avoiding the ‘celebratory diversity drift of conviviality’ (Neal, Bennett, Cochrane and Mohan 2018: 70). The fear here is that conviviality loses sight of the structural inequalities, insecurities, exclusions and harms of racism that also always shape encounters (Valentine 2008; Valluvan 2016; Vertovec 2015). Yet, more-recent work emphasises convivial encounters as both collaborative and conflictual moments (Meissner and Heil 2021) in which people (re)negotiate and (re)translate differences (Heil 2015) and build shared lives through difference (Wise and Noble 2016). Similarly, the scalability of encounters has been extensively discussed, a dominant argument being that only repetitive and in-depth – or perhaps even engineered or staged encounters – have the potential to disrupt stereotypes and prejudices of otherness, thus shifting stigmatising thinking in broader society (Amin 2002; Valentine 2008). Yet, a growing body of literature emphasises the value of ‘the fleeting’ in everyday life, arguing that a sense of feeling connected to others can also unfold in moments of everyday encounter where ‘differences are negotiated on the smallest of scales (…) [and] subjectivities are continuously (re)formed’ (Wilson 2011: 646), inducing a sense of community and belonging (Blokland and Schultze 2017) and new modes of living with difference (Peterson 2019a). In this paper, I foreground the relevance of these ‘light’ encounters and emergent connections, since they transform the public library into a crucial site of social association and connection or ‘micro public’ space (Amin 2002), where people can ‘do togetherness’ (Laurier and Philo 2006) and exchange ‘mundane acts of kindness’ (Thrift 2005). Micro connections at public libraries, as this paper will show, are vital to develop a sense of conviviality and embeddedness in the city and in dealing with and/or overcoming crises.

The concept of micro connections is also conceptually stimulating; inspired by Amanda Wise’s (2005) notion of ‘micro hope’, I understand micro connections as ‘the multiple and iterative points of connection that people foster in informal settings and their capacity to translate into wider notion of recognition, belonging, hospitality, comfort and multicultural exchange in society’ (Peterson 2019b: 5). Social interactions and encounters are key elements here. The concept of micro connections highlights them as an integral part of dealing with diversity and difference, as well as the open and gradual development of everyday urban living and togetherness. Taking seriously the warning by some of the encounter literature to not romanticise encounters and their effects (Valentine 2008), the concept of micro connections emphasises that moments and spaces of ‘light’ connection do matter, since it is *then* and *there* that people connect to the world in often profound ways. This speaks to literature that emphasises the politics of the everyday (Neal *et al*. 2018). It also emphasises that, since encounters and relations are scaled through the local to the global (Katz 2007), the connections which people forge in everyday spaces such as public libraries can enhance urban space and togetherness, shifting broader political imaginaries and discourse.

Living together is clearly not without its challenges and moments/spaces of encounter are always woven through with issues of non-belonging, exclusion and discrimination. Micro connections thus exist alongside micro aggressions (Sue 2010), the latter emphasising that unequal power relations, histories and forms of oppression and racism fundamentally shape past, present and future encounters (Valentine and Sadgrove 2014; Wilson 2016), laying open the 'micro-mechanisms of power' (Foucault 1980 in Dirksmeier and Helbrecht 2015: 488) – the ways in which relations of power are always present in and shape human relations – in moments of social interaction. This underlines the complexities of many encounters, bearing the potential for both (dis)connection, (dis)identification, (non)belonging and inclusions and exclusions. Crucial here is that the mutuality of micro connections and micro aggressions foregrounds mundane and mixed spaces as political, where living together unfolds as 'not only an active process but a shared one' (Neal *et al*. 2018: 131) and where people negotiate their differences and similarities in often careful ways.

This paper explores the potential of everyday spaces of encounter, specifically of public libraries, to facilitate the emergence of 'light' connections and relationships, nurturing more inclusive forms of urban togetherness and the significance that people attribute to these often mundane encounters and micro connections. In so doing, this paper combines findings from two research projects that explore public libraries, amongst other spaces, as key sites of intercultural encounter in the cities of Bremen, in Germany and Glasgow, in Scotland.

Contexts and methods

This paper builds on two research projects that investigate mixed or intercultural encounters in public libraries. The first project explores public libraries and people's right to community and knowledge in the contemporary city, collaborating with local libraries in Bremen, Germany. The other project looks into everyday spaces of multicultural encounter as critical sites to nurture precarious yet progressive forms of living together in Glasgow, Scotland (Peterson 2019b). In Bremen, the participating public libraries include the large central library – which serves a mix of more affluent and working-class neighbourhoods in the centre of Bremen – and two smaller libraries located in the more peripheral neighbourhoods of Gröpelingen and Neue Vahr, both characterised by high ethnic and cultural diversity, lower incomes and lower education levels. In Glasgow, I explored a range of public spaces as key sites of urban diversity and multicultural living, including local cafés, community centres and public libraries in the north and west of the city, with the researched local libraries including those in the working-class neighbourhoods of Partick and Maryhill.

Adopting a qualitative methodological approach in both projects, this paper presents findings from my research in Bremen, Germany. The findings stem from ethnographic observations mapping the micro geographies of everyday life taking place in the participating libraries between September 2019 and October 2021, qualitative collective mind maps collecting visitors' experiences, stories and opinions of library life between September 2020 and February 2021 and initial results from in-depth interviews with diverse library users between June and September 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic emerged as a central research context, as public spaces – including libraries – suddenly had to close or adopt strict hygiene restrictions. Covid-19 may not only have contributed to the crumbling of public space (van Eck, van Melik and Schapendonk 2020) but also changed how people interact with and possibly view libraries as an important meeting place in the city, altering their relationship with public spaces in general. Methodologically, I attempted to account for these changed relationships as well as the hygiene restrictions by carrying out collective mind maps, where I asked library users to write down and collect their thoughts on specific questions on colourful sticky-notes, labels and slips of paper and to paste them onto movable pinboards. Since the mind maps were meant as a low-threshold, playful and creative way to engage with library users, no additional information on who participated was

collected. The boards were left standing in the libraries for a week for other visitors to see and add to the emerging mind maps, collecting and connecting a variety of voices. In addition, I interviewed 23 library users one-on-one in a private room offered to me by each library. Both methods explored the role of public libraries in dealing with crises, their significance in urban society, atmospheres and emotions felt and the importance of their design. These experiences have taught me that using different materials, objects and forms of display can be a creative and innovative manner in which to conduct fieldwork by enabling diverse forms of participation. This highlights the potential of creative and visual methods in qualitative research (Hawkins 2015), which is perhaps even more relevant within strictly regulated research contexts. This paper also presents findings from my research in Glasgow, Scotland, where I spent time and observed the everyday happenings in the participating local libraries. I carried out 27 in-depth interviews, three focus groups and a closing event with diverse users of these spaces between September 2016 and October 2017.

Inspired by a feminist ethic of care and responsibility (Edwards and Mauthner 2002), I tried to adopt a research practice in both projects that carefully considers 'how and what we do-and-write, think-and-feel' (Askins 2018: 1280). This included asking interviewees to describe their background to me, deciding for themselves which information to share and how their identities should be presented, including their age, gender, ethnic and cultural background and migratory histories. This was meant to guarantee people's anonymity and, more importantly, foreground their voices. In terms of positionality, I often mentioned some of my own identities – e.g. being a young woman with a mixed ethnic background or just recently having moved to Bremen at the moment of the research – in order to connect with different people, building a rapport and trust and opening up new perspectives to discuss topics. A feminist approach to careful research also includes data analysis. Ethnographic observations were transformed into vignettes (Langer 2016) with 'thick descriptions' (Ponterotto 2006) detailing important observations, conversations overheard and situations I was part of while in the field. Similarly, I connected and organised the contents of the pinboards from the different libraries into one mind map per question, identifying often-mentioned themes and important verbatim quotations. I openly coded all interview material, looking for themes across interviews as well as for topics deemed relevant to specific groups or individuals, connecting themes with those collected on the mind maps and ethnographic vignettes, where fitting and helpful, to better understand people's stories and narratives.

Connecting spaces as platforms of urban conviviality and embeddedness

Public libraries represent crucial *connecting spaces* that nurture progressive forms of living together. Being open to the public, libraries enable many different social groups and individuals to spend time together. Particularly, I suggest, the chance to observe others in libraries – 'people-watching' – provides important opportunities for visitors to feel closer to unknown others who also live in the city, express and receive emotional gestures and exchange small acts of sharing, care and support (Peterson 2017). Observing others was frequently mentioned by library users in both Glasgow and Bremen as one of the main and often 'fun' activities made possible in public libraries, as indicated in the following statement by a Bremen-born middle-aged white woman in 2021):

> *You can observe people – without voyeuristic ulterior motives, mind you!* [laughs] *But you can just watch what others are doing, the kids running around, people browsing the shelves. (...) Everybody does it! I often see people watching others.*

This comment underlines people-watching as a fleeting encounter taking place at a distance that is still experienced as valuable and meaningful in its own right. As this woman engages with others through observing

them, I suggest that micro connections emerge as feelings of co-presence and familiarity with difference (Blokland and Schultze 2017). Since observing others means getting in touch with others who are part of the social fabric of society, people can come to terms with their differences and similarities and with diversity as commonplace (Wessendorf 2014). Some people, such as this East-Asian, Kong Kong-born young woman in Glasgow in 2017, also commented on the added value and significance of observing others:

> *People-watching is a kind of socialisation as well* [because] *maybe you will smile at* [people] *and they will smile back. That is good enough for me already. That makes me feel less lonely.*

The light and temporary connections seem to enable this young woman to fight feelings of loneliness and disconnection, developing a sense of belonging in their place. This emphasises the significance of 'the fleeting' and encapsulates belonging as both a be-ing and a longing for attachments (cf. Probyn 1996). Fleeting encounters and transient connections as social relations, then, can have practical and affective consequences, specifically for migrants. As 'weak ties', they can serve as 'first steps towards social as well as structural integration' (Wessendorf and Phillimore 2018: 130) as they provide 'much needed information or even just a sense of humanity, which can be crucial to a migrant's life' (2018: 134). The above-mentioned statement also indicates that fleeting encounters are often woven through with emotive elements and gestures, in this case smiling, that can fulfil a person's yearning for sharing and receiving emotional responses from other human beings. These moments of sensed connection may be small and temporary; however, they can build up over the course of a day and have a 'critical flow-on effect' (Wise 2005) as people develop a sense of conviviality in the city that is felt beyond their immediate environment. The emotional and felt dimensions of encounters and their outcomes are the focus of a growing body of feminist research (e.g. Askins 2016; Everts and Wagner 2012; Smith, Davidson, Cameron and Bondi 2009).

Another important characteristic of public libraries as spaces of micro connection is their ability to accommodate a myriad of activities and social groups, unthinkable in other urban spaces, that enable people to get in touch with and connect to others and to 'do identities together' (Peterson 2019a, i.e. forming new and shared identities around common interests and passions that better capture how people think of themselves. Since these activities and groups are often of no or low cost and repetitive in nature, different bodies are routinely brought together and into relation. I suggest that this opens up opportunities for people to experience more personal and intimate encounters and to identify points of commonality and difference (Iveson and Fincher 2011). Fostering these common interests and identities can contribute to a convivial atmosphere in shared spaces and lead to a sense of connection and understanding (Wiseman 2020) that moves towards more socially inclusive societies. A knitting group in which I participated in a local Glaswegian library illustrates some of the effects that can flow out of enacting these shared identifications:

> *I am a knitter now! (…) When I first came to the library, I saw the knitting group – the library is a big open space. I observed them. After some time, I walked over and talked to them about the knitting. They gave me some wool and needles…we had tea. (…) I now sometimes see* [two group members] *at the supermarket or on the street…we will talk. I like that* [because] *it makes me feel more at home* (Young woman, East-Asian, born in China, Glasgow 2017).

This young woman touches upon the open and public sense of the library and the group enabling her to engage in this spontaneous encounter that seems to open up, re-work and shift her sense of self in relation to others and local communities. Feminist work emphasises the unequal relations of power that all bodies are embedded in (Butler 1993), some of which, I suggest, may be renegotiated and shifted in this moment of micro connection

as this young woman enacts the shared identity of 'being a knitter' and realises that she can have a place in the local community. Materiality is an important element of the knitting-group encounters, as becomes clear in the following statement from this white middle-aged, USA-born female in Glasgow in 2017:

> *I was terrified* [the first time I attended the group] *but I got here and they were just lovely people. (...) I have learnt a lot about their lives over time. I have talked about my life. (...) We work on our things, talk about what everybody's working on. I might say 'Oh, that's lovely. Who are you making it for?' (...) or I can lean back and listen to what they are talking about. I hear about their lives, what they're doing.*

This woman emphasises how the group's engagement with the materials – the needles, wool and crafted garments – enables interaction and communication to emerge between them, as they discuss and comment on each other's work – and the doing of it – and share materials among them. This can create openings for fragile relations, identifications and connections to emerge between group members (Peterson 2019a). It can also ease feelings of uncertainty that are part of many intercultural encounters, as this woman talks about exchanging stories and gaining – as well as giving – insights into each other's personal lives while leaning back and participating in the group's convivial atmosphere. Central here is the fact that the resulting micro connections can serve as stepping stones towards developing a sense of embeddedness that stretches beyond the immediate group setting, enabling both women to feel connected to the city and 'at home' in the wider society. Especially for migrants, embedding in local communities is often a complex, dynamic and differentiated process (Ryan 2018). Yet, when it came to discussing library group encounters, some interviewees – like this Turkmenistan-born Central-Asian/German young woman in Glasgow in 2017 – remarked on the possibility of groups becoming cliquey and potentially exclusionary spaces:

> *Groups can start to feel like a clique. If you come to a group that is already established, it can be less flexible to accommodate new people. You can feel a sort of pressure to fit in amongst all the others. You start to ask yourself 'Where is my place?' (...) A lot of places have certain images attached to them which can work against some people feeling welcome there. (...) That can give you a feeling of not belonging in a group or a place. You don't look the same. You feel that you don't fit in. (...) At the same time, it can create a bond between the people who always go there but it can exclude people who join later.*

While not mentioning a specific a situation or moment of exclusion, this woman comments on how groups can provide an opportunity both for bonding and identifying with others and also for excluding people, making them feel different, unwelcome and out-of-place. These processes depend on a specific group's dynamics and inner workings, yet show how groups meeting in public spaces, including libraries, may reproduce and deepen dividing lines of non-belonging and exclusion. Similarly, people understood that the 'throwntogetherness' (Massey 2005) of public libraries can pose challenges, for example by restricting certain practices or behaviour that may further push aside already marginalised individuals and groups and their needs. As this older white, Bremen-born gentleman said in 2021, these individuals and groups include the homeless or the young:

> *It is not permitted to sleep here or to drink alcohol or to smoke, which doesn't restrict most people. For some, it can be a problem. Like, I have seen somebody sleeping in the library (...) who, I think, was homeless. (...) Staff woke him up and told him that's not possible here. (...) Or some youngsters. They act out, push the limits. (...) Staff will rein this behaviour in and, most of the time, the kids quieten down. (...) They also don't want to throw them out or put them off but it's to ensure the collective good.*

While public libraries are often spaces of care, inclusion and participation that can work against marginalisation, this statement illustrates that contestations of social power that include and exclude are also at work in the public library (Lees 1997). These contestations are experienced in tangible ways here, as this gentleman notes how a seemingly homeless man was woken up by staff and told that sleeping was out of place in the library. Likewise, he states that young people have to be 'reined in' if their behaviour transgresses the arguably 'proper' and 'fitting' norms of the library. The willingness to comply with library policies and norms makes the library a common ground where all visitors are treated in more or less the same way yet, upon transgression, some become more visible than others and are positioned as 'disruptive minorities' (Cronin 2002). Without going into too much detail here, it was interesting that, when mentioning these issues, most interviewees were quick to point out that the collective character of public libraries meant that a bit more acceptance and leeway for these groups and their needs was shown than perhaps would have been in other places in the city, indicating how these contestations of inclusion and exclusion are somewhat flexible and negotiable (Hodgetts, Stolte, Chamberlain, Radley, Nikora, Nabalarua and Groot 2008). Moreover – and in terms of working against discrimination – the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of library staff was emphasised by interviewees such as this German-born white older woman in 2021:

> *I mean, discrimination is everywhere* [in society], *so probably here as well* [but] *the library tries to… well, for example, different people work here. Some speak different languages* [besides German]. *That makes a difference. Seeing diverse people. (…) Everybody who comes here can talk to a member of staff who they feel comfortable with. (…) That can help, maybe, with feeling more comfortable when you are visiting the library and* [to feel] *that different kinds of people are welcome here.*

She touches on the diversity management of many public libraries, which attempt to diversify who works for libraries and is visible as a member of staff, to more aptly capture who lives in the city and calls it their home and to reflect the super-diversity of most societies (cf. Vertovec 2015). While diversity management should be regarded critically (e.g. Chan 2020), this woman sees it as an opportunity to give library visitors, many of whom are super-diverse themselves, a chance to feel recognised, seen and more in place in the library which, she suggests, might work against experiences of discrimination encountered elsewhere in the city. Crucial in this statement is the understanding that experiences of discrimination, exclusion and non-belonging are also part of library life for some people and echo social inequalities and insecurities at play in the wider society.

Despite these difficulties and perhaps more-negative aspects of the processes ongoing in libraries, I suggest that public libraries represent critical nurturing grounds for urban togetherness and belonging, potentially shifting dominant understandings of these terms by opening up opportunities for experiencing transient connections and developing shared identifications and relations with others. This is particularly important when it comes to processes of inclusion, since even fleeting connections can challenge the fear of 'the other' embedded in some migrant encounters and 'open up space for a low-stakes sort of inclusion where interactions are short lived' (Ye 2019: 484). This allows, according to Ye (2019: 485), for a 'breathable sort of diversity' that can foster everyday forms of inclusion. As such, public libraries are also a key social infrastructure in the urban context, understood here as 'installations of possibility' (Lossau 2017: 176, own translation), where cross-cultural interaction and social connectivity can unfold, contributing to a more social and just city. The latter has become particularly obvious in light of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, with the following section examining the significance of public libraries as connecting spaces in times of crisis.

Connecting with others in times of crisis

The Covid-19 pandemic has severely altered everyday life and public space, including public libraries. For those using libraries, these changes became very clear as 'the sudden changing social infrastructure of [libraries] as vital meeting sites of unfettered social interactions' (van Eck *et al*. 2020: 374) temporarily collapsed in March 2020. In Germany, media outlets reported feelings of outrage, fear and sadness at the closure of this important cornerstone of urban public life. Interestingly, the city of Bremen, as a city state, was able to keep its libraries open to the public by putting in place strict hygiene and social distancing rules – their doors were only really shut during the first wave of the virus in early 2020. Consequently, the local media reported people willingly waiting in line to use libraries once they reopened in May 2020 (Messerschmidt 2020) and emphasised libraries as important sites of social contact and connectivity during the pandemic (Knief 2020). Nevertheless, the situation also emphasises the fragility of public space and publicness. Often taken for granted while being used, the importance of public spaces as social infrastructure is only really noticed and lamented when they break down (Latham and Layton 2019). Libraries' fragility in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic thus begs the question of what happens to the micro connections emerging here, with their temporary break-down potentially deepening dividing lines in urban society.

While the Covid-19 pandemic immediately comes to mind when hearing the word 'crisis' at present, the term is highly complex (Brinks and Ibert 2020). In the context of my research, I approach the term 'crisis' in an open and explorative manner, to capture people's varied interpretations of the word and the role which public libraries may play in dealing with / overcoming different crises. This approach has proved useful, with people expressing a multi-faceted and complex understanding of the term. This understanding ranges from personal perceptions, e.g. depression, social isolation and loneliness, aging or becoming a parent, to more societal ones, including the 'refugee crisis', living together, migration flows or educationally distant groups. These findings deserve more-detailed discussion beyond the scope of this paper. Here, my intention is to focus on people's reflections on the library as an inter-connecting space at a time of continuing crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the strict regulations which public libraries in Bremen have had to put in place in order to remain open, the people I have spoken to for my collective mind maps emphasised their continued longing for social closeness, fleeting encounters and 'small' moments of feeling connected to others, even given libraries' current reduced and more 'sterile' state. Frequent comments on the collective mind maps included 'The library is a place where feeling and being close to others is still possible in some small way' (Bremen, November 2020) and 'The library lets people be there for one another' (Bremen, February 2021), indicating that public libraries remain powerful inter-connecting spaces, although limited in terms of how (long) people can encounter others due to social distancing rules. Other visitor statements suggested that the current situation even strengthens the value that people attach to the now predominantly fleeting library encounters in an urban landscape with otherwise scarce possibilities for social contact. People mentioned that 'Spending time and seeing people matters, even at a distance' (Bremen, November 2020) and that 'The library is the only place where I can still see people' (Bremen, December 2020). Others highlighted that 'The library is a constant, stable place where everything is mostly the same' (Bremen, November 2020), adhering to the micro connections experienced there which serve as a remnant of normality, reminding people of how they used to 'do togetherness' in urban settings now nearly rendered beyond recognition. As mentioned earlier, fleeting interactions and transient exchanges constitute a substantial part of how people come together and build connections in public spaces like libraries (Peterson 2017). In the context of the Covid-19 crisis, the above-mentioned statements suggest that togetherness emerges as a fleeting network of social connections that library users can tap into, giving them a chance to check in with the experiences of others who also live in the

city and, as one person argued, to 'collectively try to deal with Covid-19 and to look out for each other' (Bremen, February 2021).

Yet, not everyone agreed that the public library helped them to better deal with the Covid-19 crisis. In some interviews, people like this older German man in Bremen in 2021 mentioned that the continuing crisis has severely impacted on 'normal' library life, with the strict hygiene restrictions limiting library activities and routines:

> *Unfortunately,* [the library hasn't helped me to better deal with the Covid-19 crisis] *because opening times have been limited and because I come here to sit and read, which still isn't possible. I miss that. That's why the library isn't that helpful to me during this crisis.* [short break] *But in principle, yes, because I can still come here and access my things. Sometimes I see known faces, talk to the staff. Both are important during this crisis.*

He touches upon feelings of frustration and perhaps a longing for 'ordinary' library life, which were oft-mentioned emotions in many interviews, as people expressed feelings of stress, frustration and sometimes anger at not being able to access and use library spaces in the city as they used to do. This reveals the importance of public libraries as key social infrastructures (Klinenberg 2018) and as lived and felt places where emotions – which shape how society feels to different people – become known (Hitchen 2019). Simultaneously, this statement alludes to the significance of fleeting encounters and the impact of low-key sociality, touched upon earlier in this paper, in the context of the current crisis, with this gentleman remarking that short-lived interactions and passing encounters with other library users do matter. Interestingly, when discussing the disruptions to previous and 'normal' library life, a common trend across the interviews was that the same people often clarified that they experienced these disruptions as only temporarily and quick to overcome. Most interviewees connected this feeling to the efforts made by the participating libraries to guarantee access and activities, even though with added hygiene and distancing rules in place. As such, the above statement captures the ambivalence of how the library space is experienced and felt by visitors during Covid-19, indicating both how social relations are strained in this public space and how there can be hopeful and productive encounters that carve out 'geographies of possibilities' of relating to others (Ye 2016). I suggest that this also implies how the micro connections formed and forged in public libraries did not break down during the Covid-19 crisis but remained flexible and elastic (enough) forms of connection that continue to contribute to (the emergence of) sociabilities in diverse settings during crisis times.

Moreover, I suggest that the emerging micro connections represent moments of opportunity for some visitors to develop a sense of resistance to the current crisis. On my collective mind maps, resistance emerged as a feeling of being competent and able to successfully manage uncertainties. Re-occurring phrases that people used to describe how libraries help them to handle the Covid-19 pandemic included 'Coming here makes me feel powerful' and 'The library helps me to keep calm during stressful situations like Covid-19' (Bremen, November 2020). I suggest that resistance may nurture a sense of 'ontological security' (Botterill, Hopkins and Sanghera 2019) as people experience everyday and embodied forms of security. They also establish 'anchor points' (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Ryan 2022) in local libraries, helping them to maintain and strengthen a sense of safety and stability while navigating the Covid-19-lanscape of increased uncertainty, stress, fear and anxiety. This sense of security may be small and 'inward-looking' (Philo 2012) and more about well-being and people's emotions and everyday practices (cf. Giddens 1991) than protection and defence, yet it represents an important psychosocial strategy that people can use to resist the uncertainties of current urban life. Here, the role of emotions also became particularly clear as many people perceived the micro connections in public libraries as a way to enact feelings of hope and 'hopeful affect' (Wise 2013). Visitors mentioned

'I can still come here, that gives me hope' (December 2020) and 'Coming to the library is like a ray of light and makes me hopeful for our future' (November 2020). The importance of experiencing hope-*full* encounters in dealing with feelings of fear and sadness provoked by the Covid-19 pandemic also became clear in some interviews:

> *I was very scared at the beginning* [of the Covid-19 crisis] *when everything was closed. I thought 'I can't go anywhere. I can't do anything, just sit at home'. That made me very sad. But even then, I could book an online appointment at the library and tell them which books I wanted to borrow,* [which] *gave me a good feeling. (...) The library was also mostly open during the Covid-19 crisis. We could see people!* [laughs] *We don't talk but even that gave me the feeling that 'I am not isolated! There is still a place, where I can see people'. Seeing people is important.* [laughs] *We need it. We are social creatures. To feel that we aren't isolated, that the social isn't all broken but that social life continues. (...) It's a feeling of connection to other people. (...) It made me happy that the library was doing this for the people and the neighbourhood. (...) That really helped me with this feeling of fear. Made me less sad* [smiles] (Middle-aged East-Asian woman, Bremen 2021).

She touches upon how the disruption of the Covid-19 crisis has affected her daily life, with the public library – as an important 'everyday' space of social contact and human connection – being temporarily taken away from her, resulting in feelings of stress, fear and sadness. Importantly, she also underlines the impact which very low-level forms of social interaction, in this case seeing other people, can have in dealing with these feelings, evoking more positive emotions in their place. I argue that this illustrates how even small moments of felt connection can become crucial anchor points (cf. Grzymala-Kazlowska and Ryan 2022) when dealing with the Covid-19 crisis, perhaps contributing to the 'social intimacies' mentioned in the introduction of this special section and enabling people to maintain a shared and connected sense of place and belonging.

Conclusions

This paper set out to capture the importance of *connecting spaces* in the city, arguing that public libraries represent key urban settings of being together that are crucial to the development of a sense of conviviality and embeddedness in the city and the overcoming of crises. As such, this paper combined findings from two research projects that investigate mixed or intercultural encounters taking place in public libraries in the cities of Bremen in Germany and Glasgow in Scotland. Both follow van Eck *et al*.'s (2020) call for geographers to engage with the lived experiences of public spaces as well as to question how their changing function as important social infrastructures might impact on the experience of shared urban communality.

In attempting to do so, this paper used the conceptual framing of *micro connections* to shift attention to the importance of seemingly superficial, transient and 'light' encounters and connections and the spaces that make them possible, such as public libraries. This approach takes seriously the potential of these fragile connections between people, attempting to flesh out their effects on urban society: some of the effects touched upon in this paper include the development of a sense of familiarity with difference, a feeling of connectedness and shared emotionality with others and a notion of belonging across scales, connecting the local to the regional, the national to the global and back. In so doing, I have attempted to emphasise the gradual, step-by-step emergence of urban togetherness and belonging and the fragility of these processes as they form the connective tissue in urban society. This also adds to our understanding of social connections in everyday situations and spaces as key elements in processes of inclusion.

The emphasis throughout this paper was on a specific public space: the public library. This focus is deliberate, since there continues to be a lack of engagement with public libraries as vital spaces of encounter and connection in much of the geography literature. This paper thus adds to the growing interest of some geographers in this unique public space (e.g. Peterson 2017; Hitchen 2019; Norcup 2017; Robinson 2020; Schloffel-Armstrong *et al*. 2021; van Melik and Merry 2021). Turning geographic interest onto public libraries is also a worthwhile endeavour because the latter represent key spaces of social infrastructure (Klinenberg 2018) that it is crucial to study in more depth if our understanding of the texture of urban life and what makes a 'good' city (Latham and Layton 2019) is to be advanced. Increasingly put under pressure by the widening of neoliberal thinking in urban development and planning, public libraries are one of the ever-fewer urban settings that are still without commercial interests and are accessible, public and socially engaged spaces, where forms of low-key sociality and urban togetherness can unfold and be nurtured. Public libraries deserve more of our attention as they constitute essential platforms of social life where some of the lines that divide urban society may be bridged.

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What Do Citizens Do? Immigrants, Acts of Citizenship and State Expectations in New York and Berlin

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Governments make assumptions about immigrants and then craft policies based on those assumptions to yield what they hope will be effective naturalisation outcomes: state security and trustworthy citizens. This study examines the thoughts, experiences and opinions about citizenship and civic engagement, drawing on a dataset of 150 one-hour interviews with permanent residents and naturalised citizens in New York and Berlin in 2004–2010 and again 2016–2020. It includes those who have naturalised or hold immigration statuses necessary for naturalisation (i.e., those who can and will naturalise, those who can but will not naturalise and those rejected for naturalisation or who do not meet eligibility requirements). I explore how immigrants participate as citizens and privileged non-citizens. My findings include the fact that immigrants define civic engagement – what 'citizen' participation means and who participates – more broadly and narrowly than anticipated. Immigrant perceptions of naturalisation and what becoming a citizen meant to them, and how naturalisation personally affected modes of participation. Defensive citizenship stimulated naturalisation but was deemed insufficient in contemporary New York and Berlin to protect immigrants and their engagement. State-designed naturalisation processes ignore immigrants' perspectives and performative modes of citizenship and, thus, ineffectively select the citizens states say they want.

Keywords: citizenship, civic engagement, integration, naturalisation, citizen-making, defensive citizenship, performative citizenship

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Introduction: thinking about citizenship and civic engagement

Before Covid-19 forced New York City schools to close, our Parent–Teacher Association (PTA) president called for volunteers to run the afterschool programme, book sale, holiday dance and a writing campaign demanding that the city government provide more autonomy for public schools. Hands shot up. Permanent residents from Italy, Canada, Morocco, Japan and Romania agreed to run these programmes with US-citizen parents (both naturalised and native-born) and others with questionable immigration statuses. I knew some intended to remain permanent residents. Why would they invest so much energy when they were not citizens? My PTA meeting experience is neither new nor unique. Regardless of immigration status, there are countless stories of immigrants providing services. Certainly, immigrants provide labour; that is why many come and are paid. Of course, some immigrants come as religious officiants or forced (sexual and other) labourers or unpaid spouses, all of whose labour is often taken for granted. However, what is more curious is the *donation of labour* to build the community. In April 2021, President George W. Bush appeared on a television talk show to salute recently naturalised health-care workers. The former president asserted that these doctors, nurses and medical technicians 'put their lives on the line for a country that wasn't yet theirs' (*Today with Hoda & Jenna* 2021).

If the country '*wasn't yet theirs'*, when would it be? Are they 'citizens-in-waiting?' (Motomura 2006)? Why make sacrifices for the country? Stories about immigrant civic engagement and how it varies by race, gender, ethnicity and immigration status is well studied. These examinations appraise degrees of theoretical *citizenness* (Harper 2007) – i.e., how well immigrants[1] adopt local practices and participate in daily communal life – presupposing a universal, unilinear and progressive immigrant integration path (Harper 2007). The foreigner-to-member adjustment follows the mastery of what Fortier (2017: 3) calls *citizenisation*, i.e., the 'integration policy' that requires non-citizens to acquire 'citizen-like' skills and values when seeking citizenship or other statuses (e.g., settlement). This imagined trajectory tantalises policymakers and researchers alike as it promises simplicity and legibility to recalcitrant facts about immigrants' settlement paths over time and space. It renders immigrants perennially in the process of arriving (Boersma and Schinkel 2018). It confirms the normalcy of settler migration, the rightness of the decision to immigrate and an unspoken subtext whereby receiving societies are inherently better than left-behind places. Simultaneously, it offers the image of migrants negotiating parallel lives (Orton 2010) until 'the' magic moment when migrant integration is completed, ostensibly concomitant with naturalisation (Harper 2007, 2017; Sayad 1993) and assume full rights and obligations. It suggests that immigrant civic participation marks successful attachment to adopted countries. It suggests that the process is visible, knowable and desirable even if none of those conditions are true (Boersma and Schinkel 2018). This perspective fixedly represents receiving-state expectations. The metrics capture what we can count or how natives imagine their own 'good citizen' behaviour. It ignores the fact that immigrants naturalise (or do not) for a spectrum of strategic or tactical reasons (Harper 2007, 2011, 2017; Sredanovic 2022) and non-rational purposes of identity, social norms or attachment, among others (Harper 2007, 2011).

This article examines the connection between immigrants' understandings of citizenship and their civic engagement. I explore how immigrants perceive that citizenship (whether they have naturalised, can naturalise, were rejected from naturalisation or have no interest in naturalising) affects their civic engagement. Citizenship can be understood here as naturalisation (the bureaucratic process) or what immigrants believe is constitutive with the lived experience of being a citizen. Following Isin (2019), I suggest that these performances of citizenship – exercising, claiming and performing rights and duties and creatively transforming its meanings and functions – is citizen-making, transforming the collective social meaning of 'citizen'. These acts of citizenship effectively refuse, resist or subvert orientations – '…strategies and technologies in which they find

themselves implicated and the solidaristic, agonistic and alienating relationships in which they are caught' (Isin and Nielsen 2008: 38). Citizen-making transpires independently from formal process or status and whether immigrants are naturalised, can naturalise, are ineligible or are rejected from naturalisation. Naturalisation is not necessarily an outcome of citizen-making. Naturalisation is the *state's* formal process to render foreigners citizens. Naturalisation may not accord with what immigrants *believe* renders them citizens. I posit that immigrants construct their own notions of what citizens are and what formal citizenship does; by shaping the spectrum of what can be considered civic engagement, they remake the idea of citizenship. Immigrant subjects 'constitute themselves as citizens… as those to whom the right to have rights is due' (Isin and Nielsen 2008: 2). As Hamann and Yurdakul (2018: 110) assert, immigrants '…contest and transform dominant notions of the nation-state, state control, national sovereignty, citizenship, and participation'. These definitions afford new opportunities for citizenship in the modern globalised polity (Isin 2019). Listening to immigrants' thoughts about naturalisation informs us about contesting exclusion and the emergence of new citizen-outsiders in the state in which they are long-term residents (Byrne 2017).

Governments make assumptions about immigrants and then craft policies based on those assumptions, anticipating effective naturalisation outcomes: state security and trustworthy citizens. Insufficient information about immigrant imaginations of citizenship and related civic engagement can have important policy implications. Naturalisations are the last security border protecting the country from unknown (and potentially dangerous) foreigners. Do those who cannot or will not naturalise and those rejected for naturalisation behave like those whom the state naturalises? Is naturalisation necessary for 'good' citizenship? Naturalisation policy is known; it is published on government websites and pronounced through official rhetoric. Shifting the gaze to immigrants' self-narratives of *citizenisation* offers prisms into integration and connections with citizenship. This study includes those who have naturalised or hold an immigration status necessary for naturalisation (i.e., those who can and will naturalise, those who can but do not want to naturalise, those rejected for naturalisation or those who do not meet eligibility requirements).

I find that immigrants naturalise for different reasons and this informs their civic engagement. Sometimes, they naturalise to protect themselves from the state, yet naturalisation cannot protect them. Immigrants describe civic engagement or 'acts of citizenship' that are more expansive and sometimes narrower than 'collective or individual deeds that rupture social-historical patterns' (Isin and Nielsen 2008). Many actions are not revolutionary or intended to affect state power or politics. Some fit normal scopes of civic engagement or are paid. Many respondents would not call what they do 'engagement', even when it demands change from the state or society. Often, these actions are quiet but have the propensity to yield quality-of-life improvements. I question how state-designed naturalisation processes ignore immigrants' perspectives and, thus, ineffectively select the citizens whom the state says it wants. Hopefully, this work on immigrant perspectives on citizenship, naturalisation and civic engagement will inform better state policies. States ignoring immigrant understandings of naturalisation and citizenship do so at their peril.

Why does civic engagement matter?

In their seminal work on participation and democratic practice, Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995: 1) assert, 'Citizen participation is at the heart of democracy'. Naturalized citizens are legally and socially understood to be part of the democratic citizenry but what roles exist for potential citizens and how should they participate if political citizenship is not yet (or will never be) an option? The practice of active citizenship is a process, not an outcome. People learn, practice and transmit political knowledge and develop social networks through civic organisations (Verba *et al.* 1995). Participation serves as a base for mobilisation and social movement activity, to promote social mobility and social recognition (both inside and outside their communities), to

develop modes for political influence (Brettell and Reed-Danahay 2011) and to engage with political actors mobilising people already involved in community civic life (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Civic engagement can have a meaningful effect on immigrant incorporation and political socialisation in different ways for men and women in both the receiving country (Ramakrishnan 2006; Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008) and sending country (Jones-Correa 1998). Civic engagement can even lead to better mental health by promoting connections to others, sharing experiences and being considered members, thus generating a feeling of full citizenship. As Harper *et al.* (2017: 211) assert, engagement produces three kinds of benefit: '…a broad sense of participation and belonging through civic consciousness at a macrolevel, intermediate-level interactions with "familiar strangers" in public spaces, and more intimate microlevel social connections through family, friendship, and institutions'. They go on to posit that engagement yields important identity and solidarity connections which have the propensity to proffer feelings of belonging and well-being. These include the associational, social organisational and structural relationship connections that arise in encountering spaces from doing things and being with others (Cantle 2005; Orton 2010) and 'social incidental' relationships (Orton 2010: 30) or superficial interactions with people (i.e., Harper *et al.*'s 2017 'familiar strangers') with whom you have regular but fleeting conversations. Civic engagement affects the quality of community life, as higher densities of civic associations reflect higher levels of interpersonal trust and the quality and alacrity of government services (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti 1994). Putnam's (2000, 2007) later work on social fragmentation and a lack of civic cohesiveness due to a lack of civic engagement are taken up in the tongue-in-cheek title of Ramakrishnan's (2006) chapter 'But do they bowl?', questioning immigrants' civic engagement and ability to be mobilised in group-based activities. Putnam's (2000, 2007) assertion that diversity reduces social solidarity and social capital has been harshly taken to task for its attacks on social cohesion and ethnocultural heterogeneity (Portes and Vickstrom 2011). The search for a traditional communitarian mechanical solidarity built on cultural homogeneity and acquaintances is neither reflective of nor appropriate for the forms of organic solidarity built on heterogeneity, role differentiation and a complex division of labour which one finds in modern society (Portes and Vickstrom 2011).

State expectations for civic engagement

Eligibility requirements for naturalisation in both Germany and the US are time-, money-, presence-, knowledge- and behaviour-based. Effectively, states seek applicants who settle down, follow the law, submit to the regime, are financially solvent and are moderate in comportment and political expression (i.e., non-criminal, non-extremist behaviour). The 'good moral character' requirement is a retrospective evaluation of bad behaviour without considering good behaviour. Applications provide no place to cite volunteering, caregiving, participating in or leading associations or protesting in normal politics. Even at naturalisation conferral (normally a protracted private meeting with a civil servant in Germany or a public ceremony in the US) applicants are asked whether or not they lied on their application or committed reprehensible disqualifying acts since submitting the application. No one asks about good works.

The state's goal is to exclude the bad but not necessarily admit the good. Naturalisation is the state's final security check, an administrative border to traverse before citizenship (Aptekar 2016; Harper 2017). The state demands that the applicant swear (or affirm) to the tenets in the German Basic Law or US Constitution, respectively. This lack of interrogation about civic engagement or good citizenship is perplexing, as the state celebrates and expects citizen participation following naturalisation. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (2020) considers participation in the community as an obligation of citizens to:

- support and defend the Constitution;
- stay informed of the issues affecting your community;

- participate in the democratic process;
- respect and obey federal, state and local laws;
- respect the rights, beliefs and opinions of others;
- participate in your local community;
- pay income and other taxes honestly – and on time – to federal, state and local authorities;
- serve on a jury when called upon; and
- defend the country should the need arise.

The German government declares that civic engagement is ‘the backbone of our society’ and that civic engagement and public service are ‘essential for individual participation, social integration, prosperity, cultural life, stable democratic structures and social ties’ (BMI 2020). The citizenship and naturalisation proposal from the Social Democratic–Greens–Free Democrats coalition, the first new government in the post-Merkel era, may bring some recognition for participation.[2] The (non-binding) coalition programme proposes easing naturalisation eligibility requirements (language requirements and dual nationality) by appreciating the contributions (‘lifelong achievement’) to Germany and the structural barriers impeding naturalisation for long-standing immigrant guestworkers (the *Gastarbeiter* generation). The idea of assessing integration and the value of contributions is not new. Austria, Denmark, France, Germany and the Netherlands have civic integration tests. The UK floated a scheme in 2010 for ‘earning’ citizenship through volunteering, labour, language acquisition, citizenship tests, etc. The German construction *Staatsangehörigkeit erwerben* (to earn or acquire citizenship) already reflects this reality linguistically.

There is a functional expectation of future civic engagement practices without any previous history. Naturalisation requirements do not consider how immigrants imagine themselves as citizens or demonstrate citizen behaviour. Aside from being law-abiding residents, not engaging in extreme politics and (in the US) not becoming public charges, the state tolerates non-citizen-immigrants and makes few demands. There are few expectations of any kind for permanent residents, including those rejected for naturalisation or who do not meet eligibility requirements.

My PTA experience and research findings suggest that diversity, citizenship and civic engagement interactions are complex. The variations in the idea of civic engagement *are* claims to rights and forms of activity that are explicitly outside those recognised by the institutions. The state-dominant narrative of immigrant ‘integration’ that frequently shapes policy and research agendas often discounts the dynamic dance of inclusion and exclusion which morphs people, conditions and their relationships as they interact. This narrative often lacks portions of the spectrum of immigrant perspectives, like immigrants rejected for naturalisation or who do not meet eligibility requirements.

Methods

This article is part of a larger project on understanding citizenship, drawing on a dataset of 150 one-hour interviews with permanent residents and naturalised citizens in New York and Berlin in 2004–2010 and 2016–2020. Study eligibility required that participants held permanent residency (US legal permanent residency (LPRs, ‘green card’) or its German (roughly) equivalent (*unbefristete Aufenthaltserlaubnis*), were able to communicate in the country’s dominant language, had completed at least secondary education and had lived for at least five years in the country. These items were selected to match state-preferred criteria for citizenship: labour-force age, legal status, language competency, educational achievement and signs of settlement.[3] I made initial contact through postings and outreach through community-based organisations (CBOs) and then snowballing. Discussions[4] were convened in CBO offices, cafés or an interview suite. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and coded. Using an inductive method of constant comparison (Corbin and Strauss 2014)

in different rounds, I explored the emic experience of categorisation, liminal status, hierarchy of status and precarity of permanent residency. I interrogated differences over time. I coded the interview transcripts using *Atlas.ti* (a qualitative analysis programme) to uncover key themes for the dynamic interviewing process until theoretical saturation transpired. Throughout, I wrote dynamic theoretical memos about themes and mapped their relationships. I formally and informally shared my findings with colleagues, examining how immigrants imagine and practice citizenship. The project followed the ethical standards for human research in accordance with the CUNY Institutional Review Board.

A key element of interpretive work questions researcher biases in data collection and interpretations. I am a US-EU (Republic of Ireland) dual national whose immigrant and refugee ancestors hailed from six different countries. I grew up hearing stories about immigrant settlement in New York. As an adult, I learned German and worked in Berlin as a Robert Bosch Fellow. Thus, I have some first-hand experience of the kinds of interaction with the state, natives, co-ethnics and others discussed by my interview partners. I married an ethnic German immigrant to the US and vicariously lived experiences described by my interview partners through him and my dual-national children. My positionality offered a unique purview as both an insider and an outsider. Commonly, my interview partners remarked that I was 'non-threatening' and 'easy to talk to'. I attribute this to my appearance as a middle-aged, phenotypically ambiguous, cis-gendered woman. I believe my interviewees spoke candidly since many recounted painful or embarrassing events. Like Fuji (2010), I recognise that people sometimes inaccurately retell stories and considered this in analysis.

Naturalisation, citizenship and engagement

How people viewed 'being a citizen' (meaning, here, naturalising and experiencing what naturalisation would provide) affected civic engagement. Effectively, there were three main perspectives on citizenship. People could be political by nature, benefit-seekers or claims-asserters.[5] In all cases, how they perceived what naturalisation would yield shaped their civic engagement. Importantly, *thoughts* about participation were the same regardless of what I will call their *citizenship condition* (i.e., whether they had naturalised, were ineligible for naturalisation or had been rejected for naturalisation or had no interest in it). As I will show later, *actions* differed by citizenship condition. Those who were political by nature perceived naturalisation only as a way to escape governmental bureaucratic interference in people's private lives – i.e., to facilitate border-crossing and eliminate visas. With or without naturalisation, they joined clubs, donated money, demonstrated, etc. In contrast, the benefit-seekers perceived citizenship as a path to economic and social benefits – better jobs, apartments, spouses, sex partners and scholarships. They were unlikely to engage civically in the receiving or sending country except for limited activities (one-time event attendance, demonstrations, charitable donations, neighbourliness, remittances, etc.) Citizenship provided no connection to community life. Any participation transpired for social or justice reasons but only if engagement did not compete with their main focus – which was to earn money, gain an education or care for their families. A third group, the claims-asserters, perceived citizenship as state compensation for immigrants' dull, dirty and dangerous work or risk-taking when opening businesses. For them – whether naturalised citizens, permanent residents who could naturalise or those rejected from or ineligible for naturalisation – their labour sufficed as their contribution to the receiving state. They participated in events or groups with friends as social actions or worked to get benefits on behalf of family members. They were not motivated to engage in politics or civic affairs. Again, their labour was their contribution to the country and they saw no reason to give more through political participation.

Naturalisation affects modes of civic engagement

A person's *citizenship condition* did not affect thoughts or opinions about naturalisation or what it would yield. What did change was how actions were performed, meaning that naturalisation did not entice joining groups, helping neighbours or performing any action shown in Figure 1. People were as civically active both before and after naturalisation (if it transpired), unless some extraordinary event, a *Zeitgeist*, new personal or professional connections or their life circumstances changed. However, *naturalisation psychologically buttressed senses of self and altered immigrants' mode of civic participation.* Naturalised citizens feared expressing an opinion publicly as permanent residents but, once naturalised, they spoke freely. Formal citizenship enabled public speech. Permanent residents – trying to naturalise, unable to naturalise and not wanting to naturalise – felt constrained about speaking their minds or making demands on government, thus matching the naturalised citizens' thoughts. However, their fear did not prevent participation, even in protest activities! Without citizenship, people might attend a demonstration by mixing in with the crowd. Once naturalised, they felt empowered to move to the front, to see and be seen. This behavioural change rationale is described as no longer fearing deportation, as evidenced by this German naturalised citizen from Gambia

> *I was always politically involved. I was political in Gambia and then, even when I came here. I had to be. I still am. I have always done stuff… Community service… and politics, that's normal. Part of life, you know… Before I was a citizen, I would go to a demonstration. I always went. All kinds of reasons. But I would stay in the back. I was afraid. I wanted to be there but hoped that no one would see me. But now, I stand in the front. I am not afraid. I will even carry a sign.* [laugh] *I will hold the banner and stand in the front. I am not afraid now… Now that I am a citizen, I am not afraid of anyone.*

In contrast, the fear of losing everything curtailed participation. Immigrants who imagined citizenship as an intangible benefit to improve the quality of their lives and those who felt that citizenship was the reward for their labour, appraised the potential risks of political action as too dear. No idealistic or indirect goal was worth deportation or familial dissolution. One US permanent resident from India stated:

> *Most immigrants are not wealthy people. Some came from real poverty. So, if they lose something, they lose a lot. I think, deport me if you must but, for many, it's not like that. When you have less to lose, you can afford to do things that may jeopardise everything you worked for.*

The natural community-joiners engaged regardless of risk or citizenship status as it was intertwined with their identity.

Of course, civic participation is not universal. The German government reports that about 40 per cent of the population is civically involved (BMI 2020). Commonly, people lack interest, exposure or free time. Negative views of home-country politics dampened participation. Other interests in sports, hobbies or family life take precedence. City life, satisfying basic needs or servicing remittance obligations exhausted some. Others lamented being too linguistically or culturally disconnected to grasp local issues. Permanent residents who had no interest in naturalising often wistfully revealed that their lives were 'elsewhere', in the origin country, as the locus of their lives. Except for one-time donations or helping neighbours locally, mobilising for civic actions and remitting to home countries for emergencies or ongoing support were origin-country exclusive.

Defensive citizenship – when citizenship is not enough

This research concurs with the literature (Chen 2020; Coutin 2003; Della Puppa and Sredanovic 2017; Godin and Sigona 2022; Harper 2011; Sredanovic 2022; Singer and Gilbertson 2003), that immigrants can perceive citizenship as *a defensive mechanism* protecting them from the state. Interview partners described their lives as precarious, rife with fears of deportation, family dissolution, loss of standing, time, financial investment and honour. *Defensive citizenship* goes beyond the psychosocial experience of 'anchoring' (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Brzozowska 2017: 104) or a search '…for footholds and points of reference which allow individuals to acquire socio-psychological stability and security' (feeling safe and free from chaos and danger) and to lead meaningful lives in the new country. In the different rounds of interviewing, the immigrants in New York and Berlin differed in their perception of the degree to which naturalisation provided protection. The fear of deportation remained highly salient among the Berliners, regardless of the legal 'rights to remain' (*Bleiberecht*) held by all permanent residents. An artist, a German resident from Iran who was too poor to qualify for naturalisation, lived in perpetual fear of familial dispersal:

> *I would only become a citizen because it would make us sure to be together. I want my children to stay with me, for me to be with them. That is only sure, is the only way, if you are citizens. That is what makes me afraid. I never thought about citizenship, except for that one time.* [Worrying about family deportations, she tried to apply but did not meet the income requirements.] *After that, never. But now, I think, I am old. I want to be near my children. They can separate us. Make me leave. And then what? We are not a family any more.*

Naturalisation provided a protective shield against the state, as stated by this German naturalised citizen from Gambia:

> *With naturalisation you have a few more rights… I can't be thrown out. I feel good. I won't be thrown out. I am relaxed. Nothing can happen to me now.*

First-round interviewing in New York revealed fears of state capriciousness *vis-à-vis* immigrants motivated many immigrants to naturalise. Naturalisation connected immigrants to the state and *secured their rights within the state*. This US LPR from Afghanistan admits that:

> *If I have a green card, I am scared. I have nobody over there to defend me. Maybe the government will one day say 'This is not your green card'. Then what will I do? I came here for the whole life. I don't want to go back to my country. I respect the law, culture, tradition and so I have to become a citizen. To feel more the good here. If you're not a citizen, people ask you 'Who are you?' If I am a citizen, I felt inside that I am strong, inside and outside. When I become a citizen, I can defend myself... I will be just like other American citizens. No difference between me and US citizens. Abroad, they will look at me like American citizen. If I am American citizen, I have equal rights. I will be the same Hassina* [pseudonym] *but I will be 'Citizen Hassina'.*

Once naturalised, the state conferred legal and political integration, rendering immigrants 'safe' among the community of citizens. Even when immigrants suffered discrimination or xenophobia and felt on the periphery of society, once they presented passports or other citizenship documents, they reported being treated 'like other citizens'.

In a fundamental shift, this perception of citizenship-as-protection and citizen-community membership morphed after 11 September 2001, as they reported that *all people*, native and naturalised citizens alike, were

suddenly suspect. Voicing opinions and protesting became dangerous for *all* citizens regardless of status as the government acted undemocratically, as this US-naturalised citizen from Ecuador claims:

> *It's true for all citizens… So you see the people getting illegally arrested… Instead of promoting freedom for the protesters, like they should, because it's your right,* [the police] *arrest you. These people were just exercising their right. We're getting to a place where it's like a totalitarian state and there is no way anymore to express my views. So, why volunteer if the government doesn't allow you to voice an opinion or back something you believe in?*

Immigrants naturalised into the state. However, state–society relationships have altered considerably in the US. Naturalisation may have protected immigrants against deportation but not against state actions because no citizen was safe. This is interesting because the immigrants perceived themselves to be entwined with citizens. In the subsequent round of interviewing in 2016–2020 this changed. Citizenship progressively lost its protective value. Similar to what Chen (2020) describes an 'enforcement era', US citizens recounted government officers subjecting naturalised citizens and their US native-born children to arbitrary actions. They asserted that immigrants were no longer grouped among the community of citizens but politically and socially classed among all immigrants (both legally and illegally present) and (tinged with racism) with deemed suspect co-ethnic (lower-status) citizens. Immigrants lamented the inability of locals to distinguish them from native-born minorities sharing similar physical traits, as experienced by this US-naturalised citizen from Zambia:

> *It's very complicated here. I get lumped in with everyone else… confused with African-Americans… but our way is very different from the Blacks here…*

This issue was exacerbated among the immigrants interviewed in later rounds, during the Trump administration. The value of citizenship as a protecting element declined further, according to another US-naturalized citizen from Zambia:

> *People denied it. Lots of people. Once the travel ban*[6] *came in you're not safe, even the citizens. Everyone's not safe.*

The fact that anti-immigrant policies officially targeted only non-citizens was immaterial. In contrast to earlier interviewing, both US-naturalised citizens and permanent residents felt unsafe, regardless of their citizenship status. The precarity of being *immigrants* trumped any security from being *citizens*: loyalty and belonging were questioned. It is unclear if this sentiment is temporary. Among the German group, Covid-19 limited recent access to the field; however, limited interviewing from 2015–2017 (thus after the 2015 influx of refugees) revealed a new palpable fear of burgeoning anti-immigrant sentiment, regardless of their time in Germany, citizenship status or ability to naturalise. In contrast to the US experience, the interviewees asserted that the state was not peddling xenophobia; nevertheless, it was also not providing xenophilia *for them*. They lamented the inefficacy of the state's actions to help long-resident co-ethnics and criticised the state's 'open door' and services for incoming asylum-seekers that were not offered to their (pre-1973 guestworker) families in Germany. There was a palpable concern about the growth of nationalist far-right actors. As one German-naturalised citizen from Turkey explained:

> *My passport doesn't protect me on the street. No one sees it... It works at the* [civil service] *offices. I have to show it.*

Critically, citizenship might provide safety from the German state but not from members of xenophobic organisations. Interestingly, none of the interview partners expressed any difference in their civic engagement practice, despite the increased precarity.

Immigrant thought on civic engagement

The literature on civic engagement generally comprises formal practices in organisational membership and leadership and performing social service, activism, tutoring and functionary work (Perez *et al*. 2010). Interviewees defined civic engagement as being *both broader and narrower* than these categories. Following findings from the inductive research process, interview partners defined civic engagement expansively to include community[7] service and participation, volunteering, leadership, philanthropy, membership in social, neighbourhood, political or faith-based organisations with one-time (or multiple-time) actions that are intended to advance, improve or sustain community life (Figure 1). On the broader side, they constructed purposeful lives through neighbourliness and community engagement. They understood voluntary actions as purposive activities that offered the propensity for community well-being and opportunities for socialisation. Common political-science usage of terms do not always match the scopes of the actions which the interview partners described. I suggest they/we are still developing a vocabulary to describe the spectrum of 'acts of citizenship' (Isin and Nielsen 2008) that embody being a part of the body politic. Their thoughts, opinions and practices allow us to reconceptualise what citizens are, what naturalisation yields and what civic engagement can be (I avoid the 'good citizens' moniker here to avoid decrying non-participants as 'bad citizens').

Figure 1. Modes of civic engagement

- Volunteering
- Serving in leadership roles
- Neighborliness
- Meeting in interest and voluntary groups/associations
- Donating money
- Participating in ethnic or other pride events
- Transnational financial and social support – remittances and infusions during emergencies
- Tutoring/interpreting/coaching/serving as an intermediary
- Service – one time *and* repeated efforts for the greater good
- Non-voting political actions (demonstrating, petitioning, social media, awareness raising, writing letters to officials, lobbying, etc.)

"'(C)ommunities of practice" are like "face-to-face units of sociality that immigrants come to experience a sense of belonging and citizenship"' (Brettell and Reed-Danahay 2011: 79). For example, neighbourliness is a practice of citizenship and part of normal life, says this German-naturalised citizen from Syria:

> *I can't just sit on the bus and let an old man stand. Or an old lady. And that we have, that I have it… in me, and so on,* [it's] *in us. That is everyday life. That is engagement, that is every day with us…*

Providing neighbourly care is civic engagement when modesty is perceived as an important purposeful, person-to-person service to the community. Here, engagement is a social justice corrective action remedying a non-responsive state. Like the above interviewee, the women I interviewed frequently recounted this kind of engagement:

> *There are so many ways to become engaged with the community. For example, you cook something and share it with the poor (but in secret, so that you don't shame the people). You don't go and say 'I am here to help the poor!'*

Women tended to discount their parent–teacher association (*Elternvertretung*) participation as parental behaviour rather than active citizenship. They could voice opinions but not be perceived as aggressive by natives and immigrants alike. Fear that political views endangered their own or family members' status and decried as inappropriate behaviour among co-ethnics was ignored because mothers are obliged to advocate for their children, as this German-naturalised citizen from Turkey explained:

> [Baking for a bake sale] *was just something we did for the children of the school, to make sure that they got a good education, that the school was responsive to them. You know the schools don't respond to the needs of our children.*

Actions and donations were intended to generate social justice. Charitable donations were modest (even considering the interview partners' incomes) and aimed to correct social wrongs and, the most often, were a one-time donation outside of (rich) receiving societies, as this next interviewee from Turkey, this time a permanent resident in Germany, states:

> *I gave some money once, but not for Germany!* [points and grimaces] *You have enough here. Once, my brother was working on a day campaign to raise money for Africa. For the poor people there and then we should pay what we could. I did that once for Africa, that poor children there should have something to eat.*

Narrating the self as responsible for others expresses power and connectedness, whether locally or transnationally. It reflects continuity in migrants' lives: they are never divorced from their previous selves nor are they exclusively part of the new state. Times of migration exist simultaneously, consecutively and entwined. Migrants 'do not leave their origins and pasts behind; they take them with them; and by maintaining their networks, they begin to act as conduits between the two and more nations where they have connections' according to Koopmans *et al*. (2005: 109, as cited in Salamońska, Lesińska, and Kloc-Nowak 2021). Through civic engagement, remittances for well-established immigrants solidified political, social and economic connections between sending and receiving societies. The translocal and the transnational meld, according to a US-naturalised citizen from Greece:

> *If I had money, I gave it to the Church. I gave money for Greek journals, to dances and sports teams. To develop ethnic identity. Soccer clubs to help boys play soccer. I am a member of this group, it's a social club, just Greeks. We talk. Play cards. We sponsored sports teams to get them to come to America and play. You have to help. That's your country!*

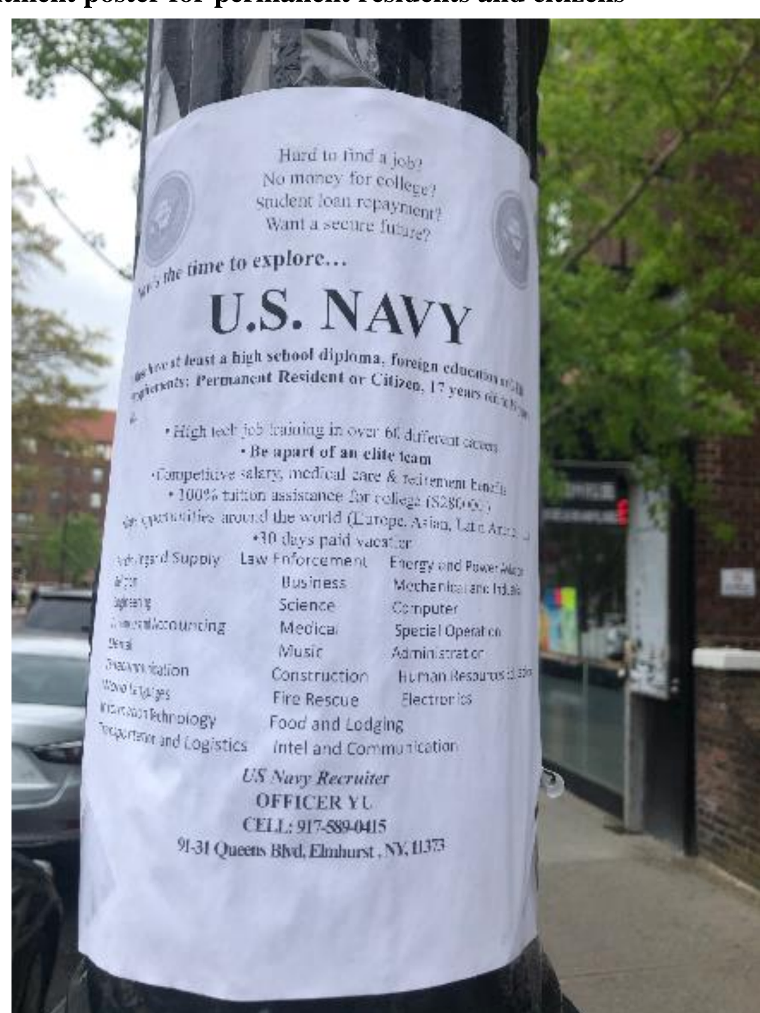
Only those with firmly established transnational practices continually remitted. For the rest, one-time infusions for natural disasters to their sending communities served as financial displays of 'civic engagement'.

Narrower perceptions of civic engagement

On the narrower side, the scope rarely included military service or 'caring professions' (i.e., healthcare providers, first responders, teachers, etc.). Even public-service workers described their contribution as a job,

identity, vocation or link to other people but not as a connection to the state or society or an expression of good citizenship. Healthcare workers and military personnel are paid for their service regardless of their intentions. Recruitment efforts recognise these multiple objectives, as shown in Photo 1 for the military recruitment of US LPRs and naturalised citizens. Historically, military service and citizenship intertwined[8] and legal bars to service were rationales for exclusion from citizenship (Bredbenner 2012). Now, military service is service but a job – not conscripted – and connections between service obligations and citizenship rights are thinner. Increasingly, military service is not perceived as an '…exceptional form of public service (that deserves) commensurate rewards' (Ware 2012: 234). Service members may be hampered from applying or ridiculed for gaming naturalisation as compensation (Ware 2012). Ironically, at one time the idea of citizen soldiers and public service in the national interest was at the core of modern citizenship (Bredbenner 2012). During the Covid-19 pandemic, residents lauded healthcare workers as saviours. The 'war on terrorism' and Covid lockdowns morphed civic engagement boundaries in the public discourse emphasising military service (especially in the US) and first responder/healthcare providers (in the US and Germany).

Photo 1. Navy recruitment poster for permanent residents and citizens



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For some, the military is service *and* a job, as a US LPR from Jamaica explained before deploying to Afghanistan:

There's nothing better for me than being in the army! I don't worry about anything. My rent is paid. My family has health insurance. Everybody eats. The army takes care of my family. Everything is taken care of.

To this low-income serviceman, the military was his life – not a job or emotional connection to the state/nation. Deployment[9] eliminated day-to-day worries about supporting his family. This service-as-locus-of-life sentiment was not unique. Like this US-naturalised citizen from India, immigrants across the socio-economic spectrum and ethnic background described their jobs as their vocation, comfort and support

'All I ever wanted to be was a doctor. I studied here so that I could be a doctor. It's how I make my living and it's who I am'.

Paid activities represent a fraction of potential civic engagement. Unpaid community-based activities, like those promoting social and political change or rooted in civic well-being, may be the initial or primary form of civic or political action available to immigrants, as most democratic states rarely bar immigrants from civic participation. Initial queries about participation in civic activities yielded: 'I never do that' or 'I don't have time for that'. However, once discussing their children, their workplace or religious institutions, a flurry of explanations poured out about coaching teams, baking sales, providing food for sick neighbours, tending to local environments (picking up rubbish on pavements, sweeping streets, etc.), donating money, remittances, serving as interpreters/translators, signing petitions, protesting or demanding services. Contrary to their initial statements, their descriptions revealed that they *did* 'do that' and 'had time for that'. Regular participation and organised groups and activities, however, were off-putting. The infrequent civic actions still provided an entrée into native, co-ethnic and immigrant local communities and meaningful modes of socialisation, while building skills and acquiring social capital. Even when performative citizenship did not make demands on the state or political arena, it modestly made actions for better lives.

Few interviewees practiced formal organisational membership, leadership, etc. (Those few who did engage with formal organisations historically had participated in their home countries and/or were stalwart 'community-affairs-joiners'). Regardless of citizenship status or rejection/lack of interest in naturalising, most participated through a pastiche of independent, quotidian, person-to-person, one-time actions for the sake of interpersonal relationships and community betterment such as informal leadership, participation, philanthropy, one-on-one caregiving, etc. They developed connections, knowledge about community issues and how things work, social capital, identity, self-esteem and demands-making skills through interpersonal relations. Expressions of connection to a unit larger than oneself, even if not in a formal structure or as a formal citizen, provide opportunities for social learning, social agency and lived experience (Brettell and Reed-Danahay 2011).

Citizenship perspectives change how immigrants participate

Immigrants knew about opportunities for participation but worried about repercussions. They rattled off names of organisations, demonstrations, opportunities for donations, etc. but eschewed formal organisational membership, as they feared real or imagined threats of deportation from the receiving state *and* reprisals from home-country political factions and governments.[10] Retribution loomed large in their thoughts, especially for those considering return migration, regardless of citizenship status. Naturalised citizens recalled fears as permanent residents and on-going concerns for non-naturalised family members. Lacking naturalisation constrained organisational civic participation, according to this German-naturalised citizen from Turkey:

After naturalisation I trusted myself more. Before, I was very reserved about getting involved in political affairs. Before, I was really afraid of repression by the Turkish state. Even here… (I)t would have been used against me. By the Ausländer[11] *office, it would have made some problems… (Now?) When I want to do something then I don't have this fear any more that I need to protect my immigration status or something. The fear is no longer there. I have equal rights before the law just like all other Germans. Only if I commit a crime can they do something to me but not because I am* Ausländerin*. That's what I mean.*

Civic engagement *citizenisation* catalysed permanent residents to naturalise, teaching them how to make demands on the state. A US LPR from Nigeria recounted how a chance encounter with an unscrupulous taxi driver convinced her to naturalise:

There is no real difference to me between being a permanent resident and being a citizen. Look, there are practical differences, external things that change. When I am a citizen, I think I will feel a certain sense of entitlement and, maybe, like I am a real American... I had this experience in a taxi…The driver wasn't paying attention to what I was saying, driving all over the place. So, I wrote a letter to the [Taxi & Limousine Commission]. *They gave me a court hearing… That is what America does: I am viable!*

She applied for citizenship shortly thereafter. Her self-narrative exposes evolution from subject to citizen. Practice in citizenship emboldened her to claim her right to citizenship, something she had not previously considered. Local community life informs how and whether immigrants civically engage. However, non-citizens may perform citizen acts precisely because they are part of the community, even when they are not members of the state. A German permanent resident from Turkey (financially ineligible for naturalisation and thus expected to have little interest in the long-term in the receiving society) explained that, even if immigrants came exclusively for money, over time they became enmeshed in the local (even if not the native) community:

The Germans think we are only here for the money. They think we came only for money and we stay only for money. We are only here for money and work. But not that we want to be here. And it's not true. It's really not true. People came for the money, maybe. But that's not why they are still here. Now we have families here, our children are here. We have lived here for a long time.

His thoughts echo a critique of Putnam (2000, 2007) in Portes and Vickstom (2011) that people are already participating through their labour, daily living interactions, etc. Rather than thinking that the expected naturalisation spurs participation, the converse is also possible. Putnam, Portes and Vickstom (2011) argue, ignored directionality and what was actually generating what: Do citizens make engagement or does the engagement make citizens? These findings suggest that the latter is possible when the definitions of engagement depend on immigrants' perspectives.

What promotes civic engagement?

There was a wide spectrum of political interest among those interviewed. People expressed intense, moderate and even no interest in political affairs. However, interest alone was not sufficient to promote action. Immigrants' civic engagement depended on having community contacts, knowledge, practice, engaged friends, attitude and environment (Figure 2). Immigrants were mobilised or recruited through long-term interest, circumstantial opportunity or a catalyzing event. Very few engaged independently without a connection to others already involved. Following Bretell and Reed-Danahay (2011), the more points of

connection that people had through school, employment, religious institutions, unions, etc., the more frequently they participated, as they had multiple opportunities, contexts for participation and formal structures to join.

Figure 2. Necessary elements for civic engagement

Knowledge	**Interest in / knowledge about an issue**
Contact points	**Have multiple 'touch point connections'** Know people who are engaged
Practice	**Successful previous experience with engagement** Home country experience Experience with receiving country institutions
Attitude	**Belief change is possible** Belief you know institutions Belief you understand the issues
Environment	**Motivating event (personal, political, scientific, environmental)** Local action taking place Zeitgeist

Interview partners ranged economically from cleaners and cashiers to businesspeople, artists and doctors, etc. Their participation does not seem to be related to income levels. Of course, some actions are more time- or financially intensive than others but, overall, *any* participation was informed by interest, situation, knowledge, *Zeitgeist* and knowing people who were already engaging. Whether this is generalisable to other contexts and times would require further inquiry.

Initial participation was frequently associated with a motivating event, i.e., difficulty getting help for a disabled child in school, discrimination in housing or employment, unpleasant neighbourhood conditions, violence or natural disaster in the sending country, etc. This first experience provided knowledge, social benefit and connections to others. People made new friends through collective action, spurring subsequent activity through private voluntary organisations, community groups, social clubs, sports teams, etc. Once people met people through one community action, they joined others. If they had social success in engaging, they might be drawn into more formal organisations with more-public profiles. Positive and intense first experiences led to subsequent engagement. One-time or low-commitment efforts (petition signing, one-time donations, etc.) were not springboards for subsequent participation. People had to believe that change was possible – that their actions could promote change – and they understood how institutions worked. Civic volunteerism through social connections catalysed subsequent activities, as illustrated by this German-naturalised citizen from Turkey:

> *'Everything began with the earthquake. Before, I never cared. Then, I felt like I had to do something!*

Similarly, a US LPR from Haiti observed:

> *The first time? Trayvon Martin's*[12] *murder. I couldn't just sit home. I had to go protest. I haven't stopped'.*

Participation in civic groups and voluntary organisations can encourage subsequent social and political action (McFarland and Thomas 2006; Terriquez 2015). Participation can generate communal identities producing social benefits, especially when people engage through community service, representation and public forums (McFarland and Thomas 2006; Terriquez and Lin 2020). In this way, engagement shapes and is shaped by citizenship.

Civic engagement is not a given. Home-country civic or political experiences were both a catalyst and a barrier to participation. Previous collective action provided skills and knowledge for engagement in the new state. Those familiar with negative repercussions from home-country participation were more hesitant to engage civically, especially as LPRs, citing fear of governmental repercussions or family dissolution. Association membership is often specific. Being a member in one context did not always engender carryover. Despite declines in organisational behaviour in both countries, private voluntary organisations (German *Vereine*) are part of normal social life and public-problem resolution. Respondents perceived non-immigrant-based groups to be less welcoming to non-natives and, on the whole, preferred immigrant- or religious-based groups. In both earlier and later interviews in Berlin and New York, immigrants participated in demonstrations and sometimes lobbying, with younger people reporting street protesting against war and income inequality and then, later, against racism.

Perspectives on civic engagement and naturalisation

From the state's perspective, naturalisation is the formal transition from foreigner to citizen-member. The literature on citizenship presents citizenship as membership, legal status, identity, rights and obligations and good community behaviour (Joppke 2010). However, as Bosniak (2000) reminds us, concepts are both labels and signals. Concepts both describe and legitimate social practices, granting them politically consequential recognition. The law treats citizens and non-citizens differently, as citizens are preferred, safe, insiders and all others are, by default, suspect and assumed to be dangerous. The state hierarchy of preferential treatment is an intended perk of citizenship; without it, citizenship is meaningless (Oldfield 1990). The disparate treatment in law generates alternate life trajectories for citizens and non-citizens (Shachar 2009), allowing non-citizens to sometimes be treated as less than human (Oldfield 1990).

The state does not demand or pursue immigrants toward naturalisation or to reapply if rejected. Immigrants must initiate requests for citizenship. Engagement should follow naturally, as it is the demand experience (also a form of engagement), not the legal status, which makes citizens.

From the state's perspective, non-citizens are functionally different from citizens and naturalisation imposes a meaningful border mediating permanent residency and citizenship (Aptekar 2016; Harper 2017). Increasingly, states employ dynamically morphing national borders to advance state policy and benefit citizen-insiders while excluding non-citizen-outsiders (Shachar 2020). Immigrants are, however, the same people before and after (if there is a naturalisation), entwined in a legal fiction. From the state perspective, naturalisation should empower permanent residents as they initiate the naturalisation process. However, do immigrants' imaginations include this demarcating metaphysical border or a continuum? Do LPRs who were rejected or those who never applied for naturalisation (because they were not eligible or did not want to apply) civically engage like LPRs who can naturalise or naturalised citizens? Perhaps 'good citizenship' and citizenship are not intimately connected from immigrants' perspectives. The immigrant perspective reveals the limits of the legal fiction. Immigrants' scopes of actions reimagine, elaborate, contract and rewrite what citizenship and civic engagement can be. In broadening and narrowing the definition of civic engagement, immigrants are excluding problematic items, while valuing contributions overlooked by the state and receiving society. In so doing, they develop a new definition and self-value as community members regardless of the state's determination of their belonging, attachment or inclusion.

Conclusion

Immigrant imaginations of civic engagement are broader and narrower and their conceptions of citizenship are sunnier and darker than the thin state expectations. On the positive side, civic engagement *is* the everyday practice of citizenship. Naturalised citizens and permanent residents did not wait for states to tell them to engage civically but, to varying degrees, helped their communities and voiced opinions. Migrants' actions can be perceived as preparation for their 'future selves' (Stingl 2021), rendering them 'citizens-in-waiting' (Motomura 2006). Naturalisation did not motivate participation. Lack of citizenship may have dampened the vibrancy of participation. However, engagement offered an opportunity to exist outside of their immigration status – that is, to be the giver and not the recipient of help; to stand up for their children and those less fortunate; to be a social person connected to others in their 'community' (however personally defined); to support issues of interest financially, socially, politically and emotionally with their thoughts, money and bodies as a mechanism to escape their migrant status and to feel valued as a human being.

Naturalisation did not change *whether* people participated but *how* they participated. Participation depended on individual interest not citizenship status, as naturalised citizens and those who wanted to naturalise but could not or had been rejected described their civic engagement similarly. Citizenship allowed migrants to feel safer and thus be able to visibly voice opinions in public protests or make demands on government. If people believed that change was impossible or too costly, they ceased. Like the institution of citizenship, collective citizenship self-narratives are dynamic. Citizenship, at one time, made immigrants feel safe. This feeling is declining, as US national-policy approaches to immigrants are perceived as less welcoming and both German and US right-wing actors are emboldened to express xenophobia. These feelings of fear also affected and curtailed more political actions but did not affect non-political participation.

Immigrants perform everyday practices of 'good' citizenship to protect, care for and enrich community life, even when they shy away from terms calling them civically active. Rather, this quiet engagement works to reimagine what engagement can be and what a citizen is. In this way, the state's imperator is largely immaterial, as immigrants may participate in the full spectrum of voluntary and civic engagement regardless of their citizenship status. Those who naturalised and choose to naturalise, those who choose not to, those who cannot because they do not meet the eligibility requirements or those who were rejected, all describe their scopes of engagement similarly regardless of citizenship status. Those who do not participate are making their own citizen choice. Nobody in a democracy is ordered to perform 'good' citizenship. They are merely exercising their rights not to participate. As the national political culture morphs, immigrant thoughts about how citizens are treated by the state or natives and other immigrants affect decisions about engagement.

Self-narratives of 'citizen life' (including protest actions, neighbourliness and all other civic engagement actions described in this article) reflect abilities to perform citizenship, not their legal or political status. In contrast to integration schemes that demand sublimation to national values (Kostakopoulou 2010), these self-definitions showcase participation without a shadow of the dominant culture and its racism, the discounting of widespread inequalities and the structural barriers to full inclusion. If, as Theiss-Morse and Hibbing (2005) assert, voluntary organisation participation and other civic engagement do not necessarily prepare people for or lead them to democratic action, then immigrants' previous civic action is unimportant for future citizen lives. In this case, both the state's expectations and the immigrants' self-narratives are appropriate.

One aspiration for the findings of this research is to think about the fear that colours immigrant citizenship narratives. Their self-narratives about precarious LPR time and, increasingly, the alienation experienced by naturalised citizens, do not match state imaginations or expectations for citizens. Even those who are by nature civically active may become afraid and recoil from the public arena. If this happens for long periods, they may forget how to be civically viable. This dark view of citizenship – for native and naturalised citizens alike

– suggests that, for immigrants, the state's imagination for 'integration' culminating in naturalisation does not reflect their perspective at all. Citizenship is not a marker of belonging and civic engagement is not the process leading to attachment. Indeed, a state's imagined integration regimes are not borne out by immigrants' self-narratives. Further, there are concerns about the precarious nature of citizenship as a whole. Perhaps these findings can initiate consideration about what makes a citizen suitable when seeking 'good' citizens and how to make (non)citizenship less precarious? By not considering civic engagement practice in the naturalisation process, counting how people contribute to community life, voice opinions, make demands on the state or help their neighbours, the state may be excluding some possible full members to enrich democratic and community life, something the state expects of all citizens and celebrates as critical to democratic and community life. Immigrant self-narratives of citizenship and civic engagement can illuminate settlement experiences and perhaps inform new metrics and understandings of the whole citizenship experience.

Notes

1. Immigrants' means here 'permanent residents' – potential citizens – and 'naturalized citizens'. Temporary and undocumented migrants were purposely excluded.
2. The proposal was issued on 24 November 2021. Prospects remain unclear. See 'Mehr Fortschritt Wagen' Bündnis für Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit und Nachhaltigkeit. Koalitionsvertrag zwischen SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen und FDP. https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Koalitionsvertrag/Koalitionsvertrag_2021-2025.pdf (accessed 30 November 2021).
3. There are no academic eligibility requirements for citizenship in either Germany or the US. I chose this list of preferential categories as it facilitated recruitment, comparison, and the states' overarching intention. It is not a perfect proxy. However, in both states, there is an implicit preference for educational attainment even when there is no explicit requirement. For example, naturalization applicants must be literate, know about history and community practices, be able to study for examinations, and speak the national language, although in some cases people can receive a waiver. Further, both states have preferential categories based on exceptional educational/professional attainment.
4. Interviews in Berlin were conducted in German. All German-English translations are mine.
5. Additional citizenship frames are discussed elsewhere (Harper 2007, 2011).
6. In 2017 the Trump administration imposed a travel ban for immigrants from certain countries. The Biden administration rescinded the order in 2020.
7. Definitions of 'community' were broad: local, ethnic, transnational, national, religious, or neighborhood.
8. In the US, LPRs may join the military with no expectation of naturalising. At times, people serving even one day could naturalise. Until 2016, citing security risks, even the undocumented could enlist. All male US citizens and all legally *and* illegally-present *male* immigrants between18–26 must register for the peacetime draft (The Selective Service registration form states: 'Current law does not permit females to register). The Bundeswehr reports that despite some recent proposals, noncitizens may not join or serve in the armed forces in any capacity (private correspondence 4-28-2021).
9. The US military operates both active-duty and reserve units (civilian 'weekend warriors'). Increasingly, reserve units activate for overseas deployment.
10. Some informants intimated clandestine activities but refused further elaboration, fearing retribution.
11. Refers to the Immigrant Affairs office. Interview partners most commonly described themselves as 'Ausländer' (m) or 'Ausländerin' (f), meaning 'foreigner.' Germany began conferring birthright

citizenship in 2000. Prior, a German-born life-long resident could still be an 'Ausländer'. Despite ongoing official efforts to promote other terms it remains in the lexicon.

12. An African-American teenager killed by a white vigilante became a *cause célèbre,* spurring the Black Lives Matter movement.

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Volpower Panel of Integration Discussion

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This discussion was held in April 2020 as a part of the Volpower Academic Workshop: Challenging Integration through Everyday Narratives. This is a creative effort to involve a live discussion and reflection on the theme and studies of integration in this special section. It brings together Adrian Favell, Kesi Mahendran, Jenny Phillimore, and Jon Fox as established scholars and critiques of policy and research in the integration field in discussion with each other while queried by Peter Scholten.

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Peter Scholten: I invite you all to make an opening statement on the conceptualisation of integration and the use of the concept of integration in the field of migration studies.

Kesi Mahendran: The first publication that I wrote on integration was in 2013 in a book that Umut Korkut and I produced together entitled *A Two-Way Process of Accommodation: Public Perceptions of Integration along the Migration Mobility Continuum.* What I did in that work – and, indeed, continue to do, is take official accounts of the concept of integration, put it on the table and enable citizens, irrespective of their own degree of migration, to debate the concept.

When we asked everyone, whether they were a migrant or a non-migrant, to use that binary to talk about integration – their own integration – and, indeed, the very fact that such a concept should exist within the public sphere, interesting things happened: people's experiences of integration did not necessarily relate to their degree of migration. We found people – who had hardly any history of migration – who openly admitted to not being particularly integrated, partly because they did not conform to the norms of the society or the city in which they lived. They were not married; they did not have children and so on. They described themselves as not particularly integrated. How confident they were about not being integrated.

Of course, this raises a more psychological question. I started to build a team called the Public Dialogue Psychology Collaboratory. When we built that team, we began to look, over the last 10 years, at the idea that these official concepts were acting as idealised starting points.

The last publication I produced, called 'Dialogical Citizens' Integration and the Possibilities of Diffraction', is in a new book called *Liberating Comparisons*, released this month. In that text, rather than the concepts sitting as binary, I [explain why] when they get into official discourse and even the idea of a two-way process of mutual accommodation, which is the EU's common basic principle of integration, [this] continues to sustain the binary. This is usually understood psychologically: a majority in a minority group seeking to enter into a two-way process to come together. I propose that the solution is to take the binary and create a lens, which diffracts it into a series of positions. I articulate those positions as a migration, [a] mobility continuum, which has 10 positions in it, from generational non-mobility through to serial migrants who have moved several times and fully intend to move again.

Jon Fox: If we are going to work with the concept of integration – and that is something I am committed to doing – it requires a fundamental rethink to address many of the problems that have been identified with the concept in public policy [and] in academic discourse. I am working on a project right now where we are trying to do that. We are trying to develop a new approach to integration that we call 'everyday integration'. That approach is a local, inclusive and bottom-up approach to integration, which we think addresses some of the problems with integration.

It is local in the sense that it starts in the local context where the practices of integration occur. So, this is a practice-based approach. If we are interested in practices as opposed to ideologies or discourses, it makes sense to start locally, not just in terms of the more manageable size of the populations we are working with but more because we are closer to the ground where integration is taking place. This is the most important part – or the most distinctive part – of our approach. It is inclusive in the sense that we cannot make this about immigrants and refugees. So, integration needs to be something that involves all of us and fits more easily at a local scale than it does at a larger scale. If we are to get beyond the stigmatising and sometimes racialised discourses behind a duration policy or the nationalist discourses behind innovation policy, we need to stop seeing this as an 'us and them' equation and we need to see it as an 'us' proposition. So, this is something that involves all of us. It is bottom-up in the sense that it is practice-based. This is us doing the labour of integration in the routine context of our everyday lives, demystify[ing] the idea of integration.

It is not something that we need to take tests for, need to even measure, necessarily. It is something that we need to be allowed to do and we need to attenuate the barriers that get in the way of that. The problem with integration is not with us. The problem with integration is the barriers that get in the way of us doing the work of integration.

Peter Scholten: Thanks, Jon. Adrian, can I invite you to take the floor?

Adrian Favell: Thank you. I am here as a critic of integration as a concept. Although I would be sympathetic in some contexts with the focus on impact and local pragmatism, I am taking a hardline approach to talking about integration. In my work I focus on the history of integration as a concept, predominantly in a European context but also in relation to US and North American ideas of assimilation. I chart the revival of integration across Europe after the 1980s and its adoption in the UK and even the US. I focus on the cost of confusing different meanings and uses of integration that are bifurcated between muscular liberalism – nation-state-centred neo-nationalism – which has really shifted the discourse a lot to the right over the last couple of decades. There is also the attempt to respond to this with an intercultural, EU version of integration, also linked to superdiversity –- focusing on local-level processes and a celebrated, interactive version.

This is what we used to call multiculturalism – or other terms such as conviviality. Going back to the 1990s, integration is used to enforce a particular sort of political power in society, i.e. national sovereignty over society. I suggest that we ought to think about integration rather in terms of its long-term social theoretical meaning. This means retracing its roots and thought [via Parsons] through to people like Luhmann and then critiquing that usage when it is spelled out in terms of an actual social theory of society.

I developed various ways in which we can critique this particular use of integration across the recent past, focusing on the way in which integration is used to continue to reproduce a theory of modern development in our societies. It is about both individuating and unifying society, which is the obvious side of integration, the production of citizenships and a new kind of multicultural society. However, it is also about bounding society and its links to how we identify lots of other populations – mobile populations who are outside of the integration discussion, including those who are free to move and be globally mobile without ever really being subjected to integration.

Peter Scholten: Thanks so much, Adrian.

Jenny Phillimore: I have been researching integration for over 20 years with forced migrants, engaging with the voices of forced migrants, trying to understand how important integration is as a process to them. For me it is a non-normative set of processes of settling, of making home, belonging and also the kind of mutual accommodation that has already been raised by the other speakers. This idea of 'us', I think, is important – and, as [Kesi Mahendran] says, not two-way but multi-way.

Because I am a social policy analyst who also researches migration, for me it is really important to focus on policy and practice. It is not just about social interaction, social cohesion or social integration, which I feel is the direction that Adrian's coming from. In my work, I question the idea of 'them' and 'us'. In rethinking integration, we talk about the need to focus on 'we' and 'how' everyone can live together and achieve our best lives. In migration studies, I think it is important to take a social policy perspective, to look at policy on integration but also the impacts of immigration policy on integration.

Like many people, I note that there are multiple objections to the use of the term 'integration' and Adrian's terms, the muscular liberal approach to it, is quite offensive. But then, it is very successful as a concept in the public sphere. It has been successfully used in organising policy and practice, rather than in actually delivering.

So, it is hard to displace it at policy level. What I have been arguing for is a more complex understanding of integration. I recently published a paper on integration opportunity structures, which is focused on context, locality relations, discourse, structure, initiatives, support and trying to shift the focus away from refugees and migrants.

Just one last point. There was a debate, in the early stages of the conference, about whether we as academics should engage with policymakers on this issue and whether, by doing so, we are feeding into this kind of muscular agenda. I would argue that that dialogue is absolutely essential. Academics must dialogue with policymakers and push back against the dominant expressions of integration. If we do not engage with policymaking processes directly and do our best to ensure that they robustly refuse some of the ideas that Adrian set out, the danger is that we will move more to the right. I use the example of the indicators of integration but, if we are not careful, we will find the language of things like shared values, meaningful mixing and the idea of homogenous society being seen as the norm in all documents. We must not allow that to happen.

Peter Scholten: We now start with questions. I have four questions lined up and one for each of you, but I also want to invite you to respond to each other. It is a dialogue after all. We have blocks of eight–nine minutes for a question, to make sure that all four are at least covered.

Let me start with Question 1. Jenny, you talk about integration as a concept that is non-normative in your perspective – you try to bring a more complex understanding of integration. My question would be: How does it line up with work on superdiversity, which is all about social complexity, complexity of diversity and the diversification of diversity? Is integration still a meaningful concept in the context of complexity? Who is integrating into what, in the context of social complexity? Can we still speak of processes like integration or incorporation? That is a part of the normative side, because you have covered that in your opening statements. In terms of your proposed use of the concept, does it help us to understand how people live together in superdiverse societies?

Jenny Phillimore: I think the concept of superdiversity draws out the complexity of integration and shifts away from this idea of incorporation. The point about superdiversity is to express fluidity, to move away from groupism, from ethno-nationalism and to draw out transnational elements.

One of the things that we rarely do in integration is think about integration in relation to transnationalism and, when we are thinking about 'us', the 'us' also includes multiple connections. I work with refugees who have family in 15 different countries. […] told us stories of how, when doing his work in Tilburg, he would do linguistic ethnography in someone's front room. The computer was permanently on, the screen is open. Skype is permanently running and the family elsewhere is joining in the conversation with the social worker. So, I think superdiversity draws that out of integration and can help us to push back against the idea that it is incorporation into something.

Because the thing, whatever that thing is, is constantly changing. This is why I like to focus on processes and not on outcomes. It is the process of belonging, becoming and of homemaking that is fair for everyone.

Peter Scholten: Does that not make integration a very broad concept, Jenny, because then integration is just like incorporation? Is that still the meaning of the concept of integration *per se*, if you make it so broad?

Jenny Phillimore: Yes, I suppose it makes it quite relativist. One of the things that we have done in the past is focused, probably far too much, on the voices of refugees and trying to understand integration from those perspectives.

There is a lot more work to be done. And the work that [...] was talking about, of broadening out integration and talking to wider communities and individuals about what it means to them, is quite important. Does it need to be a narrow concept? Can it not be multithreaded? We are kind of stuck with it and I have taken Adrian's point. We do not want to be using it to shore up these nation-state ideas but it can be done differently. And we have got a lot more work to do in that regard.

Peter Scholten: Jon, Jenny made the perfect bridge to a question I had lined up for you. So, let me follow up immediately. Jenny comes with a broader, more everyday understanding of the concept of integration. So that brings it closer also to your work.

You say that we have committed to the term integration in your projects and in the UK. If you look at some other European countries, the concept of integration is being upended. So, a question from the Dutch perspective would be: To what extent are we creating a scapegoat around the concept of integration – for us integration is a concept that is from the 1990s and the early zeros? And since then, policymakers have already abandoned it. My question to you would be, do you really need it for your research, to make sense of those everyday practices that you are studying? Do you need the concept of integration and, beyond that, the relation with policymakers?

Jon Fox: No. That is the short answer. I do not think that we need the concept of integration to make sense of the everyday practices that we are studying. But I do think that we need it to do the thing that Jenny's talking about if we want to have the ear of policymakers. So that is great that the Netherlands has moved beyond it, but how have they moved beyond that? I have read a lot of different contributions on the Dutch case. It has not been, from what I can tell, a very linear trajectory. There has been a back and forth and there's been a lot of local approaches, local experimentation, progressive approaches and not so progressive approaches taken.

In terms of the overall arc, I would like to be where Adrian is. I would like to be beyond all of this, put this into the dustbin of history and move beyond integration. But, as a journey, we are not there yet. That is the reality, at least that is the British reality. The Netherlands may appear a little bit different. But then the Netherlands may be a bit of an outlier in this case. There are plenty of countries [that] still very much operate with integration or other concepts or names that are doing the work of integration.

So, if we want to have the ear of policymakers, if we want to talk about integration [in] ways that avoid the problems of integration, then we need to keep working with those concepts. There are so many things that we could call our project – we do not have to call it integration. Most of the people working on the project have massive problems with integration. We are doing this [so we] can contribute to a shift in the way we think about these concepts of integration. It is the work that Jenny is doing as well, as she said, with the indicators of integration. If she is not there at the table then what are those indicators going to look like? We are not at the table yet. Because of that, we are starting with much bigger, more fundamental ideas. So those are going to be difficult to translate into some sort of policy but you have got to start somewhere and this is where we are starting. So sociologically, I am on board with Adrian and his critiques of integration.

I just find it problematic. We are trying to abandon the kind of Durkheimian idea behind it, which puts us into these problematic concepts. Everybody agrees with us trying to move beyond those things. How successful we will be is anyone's guess. However, we are already having conversations with people about these things. We have got people listening or we hope to have people listening. And that seems to be the agenda with which we are going.

I am glad that you did not ask me the question you asked Jenny though, in terms of talks and inflated concepts of integration. Our project wins that ticket completely. Jenny's [project] has a much narrower

understanding of integration than we do. So academically, I think it is problematic but I think it is important if we are going to have the ears of policy.

Peter Scholten: Thank you. If somebody wants to come in with a follow-up, please do so. Otherwise, I will just continue. Adrian?

Adrian Favell: I would be interested [in] both Jenny's and Jon's views about whether this shift to focusing on the more positive local dynamics of integration and then trying to reclaim the term in that sense, is an effective way of diffusing what is the dominant national policy-level understanding of the term? That reflects things like the… report in Britain, which was about imposing integration in a muscular way on issues to do with Islamic communities in societies and drawing the national line of what was tolerable and intolerable – which is, of course, how it was debated in the Netherlands and other countries previously.

There has been a shift away from trying to influence the national framing agenda. So, what I am particularly concerned about is how things have shifted from where Britain was in 2000 with the report on the commission on multi-ethnic Britain. There was a vision of a different sort of society that was really disintegrative of the national way of thinking and embracing a more diasporic vision of how a society works – but it was trying to seize the national agenda. Of course, now we are living in a revived neo-national British empire type of project at the national level. I do not contest that good things are going on at the local level and the sort of observations of things that go on in Bristol or Glasgow but I am worried about this kind of mismatch with what I think is the dominant national position.

Peter Scholten: I will follow up in a minute. First, you also want to come in at this point, right?

Kesi Mahendran: I started as a policymaker first and then left government and became an academic. I would challenge the idea that policymakers, although they are moving faster than academics, require you to arrive with the same terms of reference they use. I think you can arrive and sit at the table, presenting new concepts. It is much harder if you arrive presenting critique, because it is so hard to work with critique when you are a policymaker.

We need to say this to new researchers coming into migration in this area: there is a role for academic leadership. If you can put new concepts on the table – certainly that is what we are trying to do – then policymakers will work with them. Politically, too, they will work with that because political arenas are about newness and offering something that the other lot are not offering. That can lead in a post-national sense and lead other countries. So, we need to keep open the nature of the debate between academics and policymakers and politicians.

Peter Scholten: Thank you. This academic leadership is an important point you make. I will come back to that in a minute. But let me now follow up with Adrian, which links to the previous debates. If you look at the conference and here today, we have four British commentators on the concept of integration. I followed up a little bit, studied last week, Googled developments in the UK. When it comes to the concept of integration, it has come up relatively late and we are one of the last countries in Europe to adopt the concept.

Does this UK focus – and often UK basis of criticism of the concept of integration – not say something? Where does the criticism come from? If you look at the critics of the concept of integration, I see a lot of people from the UK and from the Netherlands – the Dutch people are half British anyhow – and the Dutch and the British are all influenced by the same literature tradition, which is very UK–American.

I think also, Adrian, you mentioned the UK–American tradition, thinking about concepts of assimilation, for instance. If I read some of the critiques of the concept of integration, whether I agree with them or not today, often when I substitute the term integration in those articles with assimilation, then it totally makes sense. It fits into a very long and deep tradition. If I then compare them with some of the work from […] and from Germany in particular, then it does not really make that much sense to me. In the first instance, the connotation seems to be different and I need your help a little bit here to make sense of that. Do you also see that? I just perceive integration differently from the UK and North American traditions than from a German tradition – what does that say of the youth?

In a sideline, at the conference last week, I had a conversation with people from Germany and they said a little bit [of] what Jenny said, [in] my opening statement. They were very concerned that if the concept of integration went on the table, then it would leave the way wide open for German governments to no longer do anything for migrants and for diversity. That is the connotation. So my question to you, Adrian, is let us say [in] the American–UK–Dutch criticism of the concept of integration, is there a language bias in there?

Adrian Favell: I hope you will give Jenny and Jon a chance to respond to the previous points after this but I spent a lot of time in my writings trying to make sense of this, the conceptual big picture. First of all you need to say that integration is a French concept. It comes from Durkheim and the most powerful formulations of integration, that solve all of the issues at both the national and local the level, were the French formulations of the 1980s, which then went on to completely shape the Europe-wide discussions on this.

Britain was very late to the party on this but the French conceptions of integration, developed in the 1980s, are very close to the American concepts of assimilation, not understood as ethno-national white dominant nation-building but, rather, an assimilation more in the kind that emerged through the work of Richard Alba. The […] volume, which I think is so crucial, is the comparative work of North America and Europe, [which] imposes integration as the single framework on all these cases. I understand that integration was seized upon as something we could work with progressively, in a pragmatic way, in research in the light of the refugee crisis. That is what you are referring to, I think – in Germany, for example. There is masses of work going on around integration because that is the word that has enabled a certain sort of progressive reflection. What I tried to do is to suggest that this progressive integration is a kind of multicultural nationalist conception.

The British case, which is the parent across all of Europe now, is a reflection of the dominance of the North American notion of building society out of immigrants and trying to deal with racial and ethnic diversity associated with immigration through coming up with this progressive vision of a nation that draws all of its strength from integration. This is what I call the integration nation. It is interesting that Britain is the vanguard nation in Europe, it has been for decades. It has been the place that people look to as the place that had the most sophisticated, developed ideas of multicultural nation-building.

This is bound up with the strength around British nationalism, as a positive image of itself in the world. It is linked to post-colonial transformations. That is ultimately why I find it so problematic, because I think it is a colonial view of the world – and, of course, Brexit has made it visible even more as a national project, of imposing a certain vision of the multicultural integration nation. I do not quite understand the contrast you are trying to draw between the Anglosphere and the continental European sphere, because I think all of these nations are operating in that sort of space.

For me, the big alternative to this was the kind of post-national project of the European Union, which often stayed out of national immigrant integration issues [and] only really echoed them on a coordinating level but which did introduce into the equation all kinds of issues to do with post-national membership and rights and so forth. I think [these] were transformative of the question while they were still happening and transformative in Britain, until Britain decided it could no longer deal with these issues and opted out.

That is the response that I would want to develop to this question but I do think that there is consistency across Europe. Also, I think we ought to be looking at quantitative work. The quantitative studies of integration, which have proliferated in recent years, use a very standard model of immigrant integration. It is very close to the… model. That is really nothing like the integration models that Jon and Jenny are proposing. I unfortunately do think that we must be able to quantify what we are saying qualitatively, in order for it to make sense as a sociological model. And that is where I think things get difficult and default to a particular sort of integration nation model, as I am calling it.

Peter Scholten: Before I go to the fourth question, which starts with Kesi, I would like to draw Jon into the discussion, because I heard you stating last week this connection between integration and ethno-nationalist, ethno-cultural conceptions of the nation, as you were criticising that automatic connection.

I look at the German debates and the connection seems to be less there than in the Netherlands and that seems the case in the UK. So perhaps you would like to respond to the previous point of Adrian's and clarify your points last week on the connection between integration and the cultural…

Jon Fox: I think empirically, historically, this connection has been quite strong. So again, I am influenced by the work of Adrian and the work that he has done here. I do not disagree with our connection but, just like him, I see that connection as the problem. To move beyond that problem is to move beyond the kind of 'groupist', culturalism case – the focus on ethnicity, the focus on groups fundamentally, the focus on ethnicity, culture, multiculturalism, these sorts of things.

I find it interesting, Adrian, that you equate the progressive approaches I would like to think myself a part of, with this multicultural nationalism. What we are doing in our project, not to sound defensive, is not talking about ethnic groups or immigrant groups or minority groups or groups at all. We are trying to move beyond that – we decided we were trying to focus, without usurping agency from the people who are doing the work of integration, we were trying to think about the work that they do, not in groupist terms but in practice terms.

The interventions we are trying to make are not with people but with the institutions, the structures, the processes, the practices that equate [to] integration. I do not know that we need to make this equation. What kind of progressive approaches, local approaches, pragmatic [approaches], the things that Jenny is trying to do, the things that I think I am trying to do with this multicultural nationalism? I certainly would make a very strong distinction between those things. Let us say that is not at all I am doing and, if it is, then I have got to stop doing it. So, we know that is the problem, right? If this has been the problem of integration, it has been so tightly entangled with this kind of nationalism.

Peter Scholten: Jenny, can I invite you in, only related to this point – integration being connected to nationalism? Could you reflect on that?

Jenny Phillimore: I wanted to reflect back on the local–national binary. Adrian has suggested that we need [to] work on and to contest national policy and the idea of a nationalistic state, which I completely agree with. That does not preclude the local. There are many academics and we have many perspectives. I think it is really important that people like Adrian continue to push the kind of thinking around integration and to push back against this nationalistic lens.

There is still space to look at what is happening locally. We need to be able to connect the local and the national, which feeds into the multilevel governance ideas that Peter has talked about before and brings in a role for superdiversity. One of the main things that we have been trying to do through super diversity is to push back against groupism and this whole idea that you can put everybody in a group. We have moved now

to a more space-[based] approach, which is a great way of not looking at groups – to look at what happens within a space. But then, of course, there is always a scale. Somehow, we have to try and bring the groups in the space together. So, we have moved from methodological nationalism to a methodological neighbourhoodism. We need to get somewhere in between. There is plenty more work to be done.

Peter's point about a German perspective on integration – and that, if we do not have a national approach to integration then we will do nothing – is valid. That is important because what we have done in the UK is made a few national pronouncements on that horrific case report and then we have said that it is all done. Integration happens at a local level. There is a shocking discourse coming out of the government now, which shapes public opinion but also government's responsibility to provide welfare for everybody.

We have the hostile environment – which we need to contest a lot more – but also there is evidence from existing work of a violence of abandonment. If the nation-state does nothing to support those who are within it, then unfortunately violence and harm [...].

Peter Scholten: Thank you. Let me also echo the point on a methodological localism. It also manifests in our own research in Rotterdam, where the concept of integration surprisingly re-emerged and was abandoned again two years later. That is a new line emerging that I have not fully made sense of.

Let me continue to the fourth question. You rightly brought up the points on academic leadership. In the sidelines of last week's conversation, talking with some very young scholars, they asked for our academic leadership. What they said is that we understand that the concept of integration is flawed, that its categorisations are problematic – whether they are ethnic, racial or cultural – and even the concept of migrants. That is why migration studies is so incredibly hard but also why it is so nice to be in this field of study. You are dealing with an incredibly complex issue that really matters. There should be training for everyone in the field of migration studies to be able to reflect critically on essential context and concepts, because we have a lot of them. We hardly have any concepts that are not essential.

They ask for our guidance – what do we do as young migration scholars? We try to understand how people interact. Try to rise above the binary in your work, with a continuum from migration to mobility. Reflect on what lies beyond the concept of integration or inclusion and all the other concepts that we have on the table in migration studies. What shall we do beyond integration? What do you recommend to young scholars in this field to use as concepts, to try to make sense of this complex thing that you are studying, in a better, more ethical way?

Kesi Mahendran: What I would say to people who enter this field is to pursue your analytical interests. That takes a certain degree of bravery because you do have to tune out some of the dominant policy discussions. You can get [caught in] the policy cycles very easily.

We have a grouping within IMISCOE, which is the reflexivity in migration studies standing committee of which I am a member of the board. It is new so it is a great time to join it. This is a space where we do this sort of thing. There is a combination of things you need to do – methods which are not dying and enable citizens' voices to come through. If you are listening to them and talking to them, they are the biggest creative resource that we have.

I do not think that we go *beyond* integration. We go *within* it. We have moved far too quickly. I really support Jenny's critical awareness and her critical realism about the conditions under which we are working. I do think it pressurises us to move slightly too quickly. What we have done is raise two policy indicators before we really dismantled some of the key concepts that exist within integration as a broad frame, the big one being migration itself – migration as a movement. This is something that we need to do right across Europe, not least because we have freedom of movement as a pillar within [the] European Union project.

We need to understand degrees of migration movement, not least because it is analytically fascinating to understand why people move and why they do not move. When we speak to people who have not moved, their parents have never moved. Their grandparents have never moved. They tell the story of how they have never moved over generations. That is a really fascinating story. We find that the groups of people who have never moved, generationally, is a tiny group of people because, of course, people have moved for economic reasons for centuries. That would be my proposal – for researchers to have the bravery to pursue your analytical interests. You would not use official statistics so easily, so do not use concepts so easily. Pursue them, get into the history of the concept. Go back to the 1930s [and] assimilation would have [been] viewed with suspicion. The very fact that people were assimilated – I am thinking Jewish communities – precisely used to say something quite different. So we need, I think, as researchers, as academics, to maintain rigour and independence.

Peter Scholten: I really like your call for independence but also reflexivity. It is a broad term but it is an important one, especially in this field with the topics that we have at hand. It is important to the work that we do, to the training that we give people who enter the field. And it is important to our relations with policymakers. That is why I think it is a nice conclusion, because we are approaching the end of the session. Can I ask whether you would like to add any concluding [remarks]?

Umut Korkut: I have one question for Adrian about class action, because clustering features in your research and you have been discussing [it] for the past few days.

Class seems to be an issue which is waning. I am thinking about Scottish nationalism and about all the social justice claims that are embedded in Scottish independence movements, *et cetera*. I would imagine that most of the people in England, especially the north of England, would also consider themselves equally disadvantaged on the basis of the claims that are embedded in Scottish nationalism.

[For] people here, there [are] certain feelings of injustice – they do not necessarily feel like reaching out to people of Northern England or other, let us say, disadvantaged communities in England, in order to build a much stronger kind of class-oriented movement in order to stand up for their justice claims. When it comes to your research and your reflections on migration, you tend to argue that there is a difference between where we are on the hierarchy of migrants, such that – if you belong to this group of cosmopolitans – there is not much of an expectation to integrate. Whereas, if you do not belong to this group of cosmopolitans and then, depending on where we are on the class hierarchy, the integration demand increases on us at the same time.

We also see reflections such as assimilation. For example, you may feel yourself assimilated, but it does not necessarily mean that people around you will look at you as assimilated. You may face these ruptures in your integration or where you are – it is based on your mobility and your belonging. Considering the waning importance of class and considering how other people would assume where you are in terms of your mobility and integration, why do you think cluster matters in order to define people's integration journeys?

Adrian Favell: Integration, at some level, is about equality. It is interesting that we shift the discussion away from issues of equality, to issues of cultural understanding or mutual recognition.

Scholars studying integration do want to see equality. It is really what it is about and the problem with integration is that you have got this dual issue. This building of internal quality at the national level is what integration is supposed to achieve. It is supposed to bring everybody up to parity of status within society. At the same time, it often reinforces the bigger inequality that is out there, which is global inequality. It is also striking in our discussion that we have not really talked about the basic issue of citizenship as the key defining inequality in the world.

So, we shift to a discussion about citizens having dialogues and so forth, without recognising that the major structuring factor is the citizenship that is given to these migrants who come through an integration path. They become full citizens who are naturalised and they are somehow going to blend into the nation on an equal level because they have that status. Integration then continues in other ways – ethnic and racial relations, as we used to call it. It is fundamentally about class in this sense. I am very concerned about the ways in which integration is being used as a way of symbolically reaffirming the equality of the nation, our joint membership as equals in society, at a time when we have spectacular inequality and freedoms at one end of society that other people do not have because they are not mobile in the same way and are not subject to the same sort of integration pressures. There is this conjoined irony that we are projecting the core integration of the nation on these supposedly indigenous nations, working-class-type natives – this myth that has arisen in the British political discourse – who are supposed to embody the true integration of the nation. They presented [as] the group against which new migrants are going to be measured. We are expecting them to integrate into the same places they live and so forth, when these people themselves are absolutely not integrated. We do not live in an integrated society. We live in a disintegrated society that is using integration in order to reinforce the big disintegration of global inequalities as well. I have not answered your question directly but that lays out a little bit of thinking about your question.

Peter Scholten: Thank you.

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— SPECIAL SECTION TWO —

Editorial Introduction: Migration Dynamics, Trajectories and Policies in the Context of Russian Full-Scale Aggression against Ukraine

Oksana Mikheieva*, Marta Jaroszewicz**

This short introduction presents the context and background information to the CEEMR special section analysing the migration dynamics, trajectories, everyday reality and policies in the context of Russian full-scale aggression against Ukraine. The special section contains the first group of articles dealing with the unprecedented migration consequences of military aggression against Ukraine, including air strikes on many Ukrainian cities, the use of indiscriminate weapons, killing and deportations as well as the economic consequences of protracted armed conflict. The intensity of the migration movement should also be explained by the quick opening by neighbouring countries of their borders to the incoming refugees. The exceptionality of the situation and high uncertainty about further developments led us to conclude that this special section should not follow any prior conceptual background but should be open to different perspectives and approaches in studying migration from/in/to Ukraine.

Keywords: Ukraine, Russian aggression, forced migration, migration policies

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Setting the scene

This short introduction presents the context and background information to the CEEMR special section analysing the migration dynamics, trajectories, everyday reality and policies in the context of Russian full-scale aggression against Ukraine. The special section contains the first group of articles dealing with the unprecedented migration consequences of military aggression against Ukraine, including air strikes on many Ukrainian cities, the use of indiscriminate weapons, killing and deportations as well as the economic consequences of protracted armed conflict. The intensity of the migration movement should also be explained by the quick opening by neighbouring countries of their borders to the incoming refugees. The exceptionality of the situation and high uncertainty about further developments led us to conclude that this special section should not follow any prior conceptual background but should be open to different perspectives and approaches in studying migration from/in/to Ukraine.

It should be emphasised that Russian military intervention had already started back in 2014; although it did not cover the whole territory of Ukraine, it had a predominant influence on the migration patterns of Ukrainians. The beginning of the Russian aggression in 2014 had a series of direct and indirect consequences that affected the migration intentions of the population. In most cases, Ukrainian citizens who migrated to EU countries from the temporarily occupied territories between 2014 and 2021 did not receive refugee status, as most of the territory of Ukraine remained under the control of the Ukrainian government. As a result, the majority of those who left the occupied territories at that time chose mixed migration strategies, including legal and illegal employment, marriage and educational migration.

Russian aggression in this period also affected labour migration from Ukraine in general, in particular with regard to its distribution among destination countries. Between 2014 and 2016, Ukrainians started travelling for a variety of reasons to the West more often. For example, according to the data from a representative survey conducted in Poland among Ukrainian labour migrants who left between 1991 and 2019, 77.3 per cent of the participants said that they first went to work in Poland in 2015 and later (Mikheieva and Susak 2019: 10). From 1991 to 2011, quite low rates of migration from Ukraine to Poland were recorded (a total of 10.5 per cent of respondents indicated that they had left in that period). Between 2012 and 2014, a revival of migration flows was noticeable (with 12.2 per cent of respondents leaving at that time). At the same time, there was also a change in the direction of the migration flows. From 2014, there was a decrease in the flow of labour migrants to Russia and an increase in the flow to EU member states and, above all, to Poland (Malynovska 2020). The internal geography of labour migration from Ukraine has also started to change. While, before 2014, the main contributors of labour migrants to Europe were the western regions of Ukraine, after that date almost all regions of the country gradually started to be included in the ‘western’ vector of labour migration. In 2021, 1.57 million Ukrainian citizens received permits to stay in the EU, making them the third largest group of citizens representing non-EU countries (Eurostat 2022).

The onset of full-scale aggression created a radically new situation. In February 2022, Europe received the largest number of refugees since the Second World War. As a result of the war in Ukraine, the number of all refugees living in the EU increased by 20 per cent (European Commission 2023). Millions of Ukrainians crossed the country’s state border in the early days of the war in search of aid and asylum. In response to the scale and intensity of the refugee crisis and for the first time in its history, the European Union activated the Temporary Protection Directive ((TPD), which created a framework for managing massive refugee flows. TPD was adopted in 2001 as a lesson learnt from the Balkan wars, yet was not activated until the Russian full-scale invasion (European Commission 2022).

According to UNHCR (2023) data, as of 1 July 2023, some 6,302,600 refugees from Ukraine were recorded globally (the figure recorded in Europe was 5,949,500 while, beyond Europe, it was 353,100). The main

countries hosting the largest number of refugees from Ukraine as of 31 May 2023 were Germany (1,111,590 or 28 per cent of the total), Poland (991,375; 25 per cent) and the Czech Republic (340,090; 8 per cent) (Eurostat 2023a).

Ukrainian forced migration in conditions of war: problems and challenges of research

The beginning of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and the full-scale invasion in 2022 led to an intensification of research on the forced migration of Ukrainians – both academic and practical – which focused on rapid implementation and practical response. The intensification of research interest in the number of texts related to the study of war-affected societies is important. However, at this stage of studying the Ukrainian situation, we see the prevalence of empirical over theoretical research and the conceptualisation of problems, which generally creates an oversaturation of details and facts with an insufficient level of understanding and assessment of what is happening.

The situation when assessing the scale of forced migration of Ukrainians due to the war is complicated by the fact that many statistics on both the population of Ukraine and the number of migrants are approximate, incomplete and estimated. This applies to both statistical estimates of the population as a whole and of internal and external migration. The last census in Ukraine was conducted in 2001. Accordingly, data on the number of people in the country are approximate, vary due to the use of different methodologies and refer to different geographical areas (e.g. related to the inclusion or exclusion from counts and estimates of the territories occupied in 2014).

Similar problems arise when calculating the number of labour migrants due to the existence of different models of labour migration (permanent, return, border, circular, etc.), to the partial preservation of its irregular nature and to different methods of calculation. As a result, there is a significant discrepancy between the data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the National Bank of Ukraine and the International Monetary Fund on the number of labour migrants (Sushko, Kulczycka and Minicz 2019: 5). The same applies to internal forced migration after the start of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014.

Refugee and internal migration statistics are also processual in nature. The war continues while its duration, the scale of its consequences and the outcome remain in question. All this forms a situation with a high level of uncertainty. As a result, most of the surveys among Ukrainian forced migrants conducted in Europe today do not answer the question about the future of this migration, the prospects of people's return or their integration into the local communities of the European host countries. The granting of protection in the EU is temporary and there are no clear guidelines for future decisions in this regard. On the other hand, the situation in Ukraine remains problematic. Ukrainian forced migrants associate their return to the country primarily with the end of the war. However, immediately after their security-related needs, they voice expectations related to the economy – adequate salaries and higher standards of living in Ukraine. An important factor is also the restoration and availability of an infrastructure necessary for life (Vyshlinsky, Mykhailyshyna, Samoiliuk and Tomilina 2023). This configuration of expectations, in the context of an ongoing full-scale war, either questions the reality of return or postpones the decision indefinitely.

Extremely problematic and important for an in-depth understanding of the situation with forced migration is the issue of the migration of Ukrainians to the Russian Federation after the beginning of the full-scale invasion. The forced passportisation of residents of the occupied territories and forced migrants from Ukraine, filtration practices, the restriction of the right to movement for people living in the territories occupied after 2022 and the forced displacement (deportations) to the territory of the Russian Federation of vulnerable categories of the population – primarily older people and children – all raise questions about the assessment of the scale of forced migration from Ukraine to the Russian Federation. How can we divide those Ukrainian

citizens who voluntarily chose this migration and those who became victims of the aggressor's actions and ended up in Russian captivity, in filtration camps or deported? A separate research issue may be the legal status of forced migrants from Ukraine to the Russian Federation. Who are they from the point of view of international law? Which state is responsible for them? Can the aggressor state be responsible for the citizens of the state that was attacked?

Another important issue is the policies of different European host countries concerning Ukrainian refugees. Despite the existence of a common European space and common directives regulating the status of Ukrainian migrants in Europe, the situation in each individual country has its own specifics. For example, we can see this difference of approach in the top three countries – Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic – in terms of the number of Ukrainian refugees accepted. The German government is committed to providing temporary refuge-seekers with a social package, including financial help for housing, health insurance, language courses and monthly payments; this generally creates conditions for the gradual soft integration of Ukrainian refugees into both local communities and the labour market. Poland and the Czech Republic do not have the same social packages for refugees as Germany but the migration from Ukraine in the context of a full-scale war relies heavily on the experience of previous migration, extensive local government and civil society support, the Ukrainian community in Poland and the cultural and linguistic proximity of the population of the two countries, which provides Ukrainians with faster integration and entry into the labour market. Also, as a recent Centre of Migration Research of University of Warsaw (CMR UW) survey demonstrated, the vicinity of the Ukrainian territory and extensive migration networks make it easier for the refugees to combine life in Poland with distance work and other transnational activities (Górny and Kaczmarczyk 2023). The difference in contexts at the level of individual European countries and their administrative parts makes the nuanced processes related to the everyday life of forced migrants an important research issue.

The peculiarity of post-2022 external forced migration from Ukraine is its high intensity and simultaneity. According to UNHCR data, from 24 February 2022 to 9 May 2023, some 21,496,802 people crossed the border out of Ukraine and 12,724,350 people crossed the border in the opposite direction. These statistics show the increased mobility of the Ukrainian population due to full-scale Russian invasion but do not show the real scale of forced external migration, as they contain information, among other things, on the movement of the same people to and from Ukraine. However, the dynamics of these crossings show that the largest outflow of people from Ukraine occurred in the first few months of the war. Thereafter, the intensity of border crossings remained more or less constant, comparable to the pre-war level (CReAM 2023). The same dynamics is confirmed by the figures for Germany, where 68 per cent of Ukrainian immigrants arrived in the first three months after the beginning of the full-scale aggression by the Russian Federation (Federal Statistical Office of Germany 2023). Overall, about 18 per cent of the Ukrainian population moved to Europe during the full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Another important feature of Ukrainian forced external migration is its socio-demographic parameters. In contrast to other waves of refugees, Ukrainian migration consists primarily of women and children. The education factor also plays an important role. The majority of Ukrainians forced to migrate to the EU (66 per cent) have higher education. This significantly exceeds the overall figures for Ukraine (29 per cent) and the EU (33 per cent) (Federal Statistical Office of Germany 2023). The mass transition, as a result of forced migration, to low-skilled jobs with a general lowering of the usual standards of living has already created and will continue to create additional tensions in the host communities. Another important problem in the future will be the issue of the mental health of forced migrants. The trauma of war, forced displacement, difficult migration experiences and constant exposure to information flows of the ongoing war are factors that significantly affect the moral and psychological state of forced migrants. Mental reaction to trauma often has a delayed character and, accordingly, is one of the problems facing the future of both Ukraine and the EU.

Understanding these complexities in the study of Ukrainian forced migrations in war conditions is important both for researchers seeking to make a deep and multidimensional assessment of what is happening and for making informed political and managerial decisions.

The migration and mobility of Ukrainians: short state-of-the-art

One can distinguish several main topics related to migration from/in Ukraine in the existing studies. This short review should not, however, be treated as fully fledged state-of-the-art but, rather, as a contextual background to the presentation of the articles in this special section.

A strand of literature that looks at the process of transforming Ukraine into a net immigration country, together with the forms, trajectories and narratives about labour migration, can be distinguished. Temporary labour migration (Pirozhkov, Malynovska and Homra 2003) – which converted from 'local mobility' – or different forms of transborder activities, including petty trade, began to be researched in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. As such, the Ukrainian case was not an exception from other post-communist Eastern and Central European countries (Vakhitova and Fihel 2020). One aspect of the relevant literature was dealing with the qualitative assessment of the phenomenon, taking into consideration the scarcity of statistical data (Prokhorov, Yablonskyy, Piontikivska, Ruda and Hamaniuk 2018). Other researchers were looking at the policies, migration networks, migrant anchoring and legal and other conditions in the receiving countries and, finally, the settlement practices of Ukrainian migrants (*inter alia*, Fedyuk and Kindler 2016; Fonseca, Pereira and Esteves 2014; Górny, Grzymała-Kazłowska, Kępińska, Fihel and Piekut 2007; Grzymała-Kazłowska 2020). In particular, literature focusing on Ukrainian migrants in the EU depending on their legal status and contesting the simple contradiction between legal and irregular migration, access to healthcare, education and social security in the context of the EU laws and policy practices, can shed some light on current discussions of the legal status of Ukrainians in the EU (see the article by Łysienia in this section).

The second strand of literature is the studies on the Ukrainian diaspora and transnationalism. However, traditionally perceived as looking at the forms of cultivation of national language and culture, diaspora studies have situated research on Ukrainian migration in the realm of politics as well as civic and political activity (Dunin-Wąsowicz and Fomina 2019; Lapshyna 2019; Solari 2018).

Last, but not least, an important strand of literature written after 2014 looks at the mobility consequences of the Russian occupation of Crimea and parts of Eastern Ukraine, studying both the security and the political context of external migration as well as a certain 'invisibility' of forced displacement (Drbohlav and Jaroszewicz 2016; Sasse 2020). Finally, there are many extensive in-depth studies looking at internal displacement through the prism of social cohesion, national identity, geopolitical struggles, civil society activism or individual adaptation strategies (Bulakh 2020; Kuznetsova and Mikheieva 2020; Rimpiläinen 2020). The article by Steblyna (in this volume) contributes further to this strand of literature.

We can conclude that Ukraine as a country, represented by the existence of large historic diaspora(s), forced displacement and territorial changes after the Second World War, extensive labour immigration and also hosting emigrants, has received significant attention from migration scholars. In its volume and the diversity of its topics, the existing research cannot, however, be compared to those studying classic emigration countries. Another crucial challenge impeding the development of scholarship is the insufficient knowledge of publications in English about research written in other languages, particularly Ukrainian. An important issue that also hampers research is the lack of basic demographic data stemming from the fact that the last national census in Ukraine was conducted only in 2001 (see the second section of the introduction and also the article by Pozniak in this volume). At this stage of the study of Ukrainian forced migration, this set of problems results in the prevalence of qualitative over quantitative research. Also, as underlined by Fedyuk and Kindler (2016),

despite the fact that Ukrainians constitute one of the most numerous immigrant groups in the EU member states, their presence often went unnoticed among other Eastern and Central European migrant communities. Finally – and this also a task that this special section attempts to address – is an insufficient understanding of what the 2014 and 2022 Russian aggression meant for migration dynamics and a tendency to keep studying post-2014 mobility solely through the prism of labour migration.

Introducing the papers

This special section contains the first group of articles submitted in response to the CEEMR call for papers on the consequences, trajectories, policies, discourses on war and displacement, emergency practices and other aspects pertaining to the migration resulting from the Russian illegal aggression against Ukraine. All kinds of migration happening in the aftermath or in the context of the Russian aggression on the Ukrainian territory after 24 February 2022 remain within the scope of the current special section. Both the CEEMR editors and the special-section guest editors purposely did not specify any topics for possible contributions, leaving to the authors the choice of topics, theories and methods. At an epistemological level, however, the special section's purpose was to give voice to Ukrainian and other researchers from – or those studying migration from/to/within – Central and Eastern Europe. The result reflected the perception that, particularly in times of war and conflict, those who personally experience the war and/or forced migration or present a closer perspective on the ongoing atrocities, should be heard first. Secondly, there is ample evidence that scholars from the region are under-represented in social-science research – including migration studies – and thus more rarely participate in knowledge production at both a general level and a regional one (Düvell and Lapshyna 2022; Mälksoo 2022; Vorbrugg and Bluwstein 2022). This argument was not made only to point to the numeric unrepresentativeness of Eastern and Central European scholars but also to emphasise that many topics and perspectives could have gone untouched or unnoticed due to such a narrow generalist, rather than context-sensitive, knowledge production. Possible biases deriving from these knowledge gaps should be taken seriously in current debates about the Russian war against Ukraine (Artiukh 2022; Khromeychuk 2022; Mälksoo 2022), Ukraine's future and the consequences for migration and mobility in Europe.

Despite such a broad range of topics, disciplines (political science, law, sociology, demography) and methods used by the authors of the articles in this special section, several topics appear repeatedly and are touched upon by almost all the authors. These include:

- the different forms of struggle during the process of forced mobility and immobility caused by the armed conflict and related insecurities and emergency governance in times of war (at different levels – pan-national, state, societal and, finally, individual);
- the narratives, discourses and stereotypes that accompany Russian aggression against Ukraine and the related migratory movements;
- the time, temporality and uncertainty in forced migration caused by the military aggression and methods of coping with this uncertainty; and
- rights versus obligations in times of war at different levels – the right to leave the country or to remain there and obligations towards the homeland experienced by migrants.

The first article, by **Nataliia Steblyna**, was written before the full-scale invasion of 24 February 2022 yet it tackles the topic of internal displacement in Ukraine after the Russian illegal occupation of Crimea and the start of the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine in Winter/Spring 2014. In 2015, the Ukrainian authorities reported approximately 1.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) which represented one of the largest displacement crises after the Second World War (UNHCR 2015). The literature pertaining to migration trajectories, the adaptation of IDPs to their new places of residence and the policies adopted towards them is

fairly abundant (Bulakh 2020; Ivashchenko-Stadnik 2017; Jaroszewicz and Grzymski 2023; Kuznetsova and Mikheieva 2020; Rimpiläinen 2020; Sasse 2020), yet Steblyna's article offers a rarely adopted research perspective that looks at the social and political attitudes towards IDPs via the lens of the local press and local communities. With the application of a rigorous frame analysis of the local content of online media services in Kharkiv and Dnipro in 2015–2018, the author offers a typology of the narratives pertaining to IDPs – created or replicated by the local media – and how they evolved over time. Steblyna differentiates between four main frames: 'generalisation' (speaking of IDPs as an essentialised group, a mass), 'victim', 'help-receiver', and 'threat'. A very valuable contribution by Steblyna is bringing time into her research, showing how less-favourable narratives of IDPs appeared over the years marked with prolonged military activities and related socio-economic consequences. By linking the existing literature on internal displacement in different geographical contexts – where IDPs are often portrayed as helpless victims – with the case of Ukraine experiencing the first phase of the conflict with Russia, the author also voices clear normative postulates calling for greater responsibility by local media in introducing migrants to new communities and fighting against biased narratives.

The second article, by **Oleksii Pozniak**, 'The Situation of Forced Migrants from Ukraine in Europe after Russian Military Aggression and Problems of Migration Policy of Ukraine in New Conditions', was prepared in the first few months after the full-scale Russian aggression. The author, a demographer and researcher at the National Academy of Science of Ukraine, sought any possible data that could help to analyse the migration dynamics resulting from the external aggression but also put the data possessed in the wider context of the different types of migration movement of the inhabitants of Ukraine after 1991. Being mainly a quantitative researcher in a war situation where representative surveys cannot be conducted, Pozniak attempts to base his assessment on different auxiliary sources. These include data on the border crossings obtained from the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (where possible compared against the data of the counterpart institutions of the destination countries and international organisations) as well as in-depth expert semi-structured interviews conducted between July and September 2022. In a somewhat rigorous demographic manner, Pozniak looks at the migration transformation which Ukraine is undergoing, both demographic and social, including the dynamics of attitudes of Ukrainian society towards those who have left the country. He studies the ongoing immigration through the prism of temporality but also the rights and obligations as seen within Ukrainian society. He concludes with recommendations for the Ukrainian government by positing that the impact of a full-scale war on the future demographic situation in Ukraine will be reflected primarily in migration losses; he thus calls for an active migration policy that encompass both maintaining relations with Ukrainians abroad and easing immigration for selected categories of foreigners – for instance, foreign students.

The next article, by **Maja Łysienia**, touches upon different aspects pertaining to the policies and 'solidarity' practices of Poland as being the first country of entry for the majority of war refugees and still being one of the leading countries in hosting forced migrants from Ukraine. As such, her article adds to the growing literature studying the narratives and practices that followed activation by the EU of the temporary protection directive. This TPD allowed people fleeing Ukraine to enter, reside and obtain rights in the EU territory without hindrance, while also granting Ukrainian migrants solely with a temporary status and differentiating between Ukraine's citizens and third-country nationals (Carrera and Ineli Ciger 2023; Klaus 2022; Motte-Baumvol, Mont'Alverne and Braga Guimarães 2022). Maja Łysienia studies the compatibility between Polish and EU law, in particular the similarities and differences between the temporary protection directive and the new law that Poland adopted to offer rights to Ukrainian nationals and their family members. The originality of Łysienia's research lies in the detailed legal analysis that assesses possible legal discrepancies across several dimensions, including: eligibility for temporary protection, residence permits, accommodation, family reunification, returns and measures after temporary protection ends and remedies. Her general conclusion is that the Polish law on temporary protection does not fully follow the temporary protection directive and lists

here the cases of non-Ukrainian children and dependent family members of Ukrainian nationals, Ukrainian nationals and their spouses who entered Poland in an irregular manner as persons excluded from the protection offered by the Polish legislation.

Conclusions and avenues for further research

Several quite straightforward and a few less-obvious conclusions that also encourage further exploration are forthcoming from this special section. One conclusion is that the ongoing full-scale Russian aggression puts the lives of millions of Ukrainians at direct risk of falling victim to military hostilities; it also means that they are in constant need of making decisions on their mobility/immobility based on their individual security calculations. Another important feature of the continuing atrocities is the high level of uncertainty as to when and how the war will end and when forced migrants will be able to rejoin their family members from whom they were obliged to separate. In such circumstances, the cognitive and physical barriers to the analytical comprehension of the Ukrainian experience of war and forced emigration are quite straightforward and result in the predominance of empirical exploration over theoretical understanding of the problems. Secondly, the necessity and importance of theoretical generalisations is directly conditioned not only by their heuristic potential but also by their practical value. The conceptual understanding of the problems is very important for an adequate and timely response to the challenges provoked by Russian aggression and full-scale war.

What is clear, however, at both epistemological and empirical-analysis levels, is that Russian aggression against Ukraine shed a light on some severe blindspots in migration and refugee research – resulting, among other things, from the insufficient presence of Eastern and Central European migration researchers in global knowledge production. To cure this problem, more and more-diversified research on Ukrainian migration is needed; however, researchers directly experiencing the war and its consequences should also be given the opportunity to make their voices heard. At the same time, the problem of giving voice raises a number of additional questions. To what extent can people who find themselves in a situation of direct threat to their lives and are forced to deal with issues of daily survival be expected to produce scientific knowledge that meets international standards and deadlines or perform highly intellectual work on a volunteer basis as part of their professional activities in peace time? Is there a real demand for local expertise or are Ukrainian experts perceived primarily as carriers of personal traumatic experiences that they can share with others? Also what is lacking is the research revealing postcolonial legacies in studying Eastern Europe and also examining migration from Ukraine from a long historical perspective, including the context of geopolitical and national identity struggles. The migration of Ukrainians is not only a story of labour migration.

All the articles in this special section clearly demonstrate that forced migration is a research area within which contemporary Ukrainian migration should be conceptualised. Perhaps one of the most striking blind spots was the refusal, perhaps unconscious, by some academics, media and analytical institutions in 2014 to see the beginning of the war in Russia's actions towards Ukraine and in bringing refugee migration from Ukraine. Also, in many cases, we are not dealing with 'pure forms' but with hybrid trajectories of forced migration – when people start their journey with an IDP status, then continue as asylum-seekers before becoming labour migrants. The same hybrid trajectories can be observed now in the context of a full-scale Russian invasion, described, *inter alia*, by Pozniak in this section. Another issue is the trajectories of internal displacement and the policies of both the central government and local communities in adapting newly arriving co-inhabitants. In her contribution, Steblyna proposes a detailed in-depth analysis of biased narratives that may accompany internal displacement. What is still hampered by the absence of data and the inability to gather any on Russia are studies on the deportations and the 'voluntary' migration of Ukrainian citizens to Russia.

Among the more detailed avenues for further research one could raise the issue of the assessment of the scale of forced migration (see Pozniak's article in this section). Today there are many sources of statistical information on the number of people who were forced to flee the war, both inside and outside the country. However, the data from the different sources vary significantly. A number of migrant practices and strategies also remain essentially invisible to statistical records. For example, the statistical recording of IDPs in Ukraine after 2014 is complicated by the fact that some people preferred to avoid registering and obtaining official status due to specific perceptions of IDPs in society, stigmatising practices and restrictions on political rights. Today the situation with IDPs has changed drastically. It has become much easier to obtain status and assistance from the state. However, even in this case, there is the problem of taking into account the scale of internal forced migration, primarily because of its procedural nature – people leave the war zones and return home whenever possible. Accordingly, in this case, the more important parameter for assessing the scale of migration is not the number of people who moved but the duration of their stay away from home. All this raises a number of questions for researchers on how to describe the situation of internal forced migration in statistical parameters. What criteria for assessing the situation are really informative? How can the scale of forced migration be estimated, given the high level of avoidance of official registration or floating data in a context where people's forced mobility is processual in nature?

In assessing the scale and forms of forced migration in the context of a full-scale invasion, there are also many aspects that are important for understanding the situation. At the initial stage, some Ukrainians crossed the EU border on the basis of the visa-free regime, which gives Ukrainians the right to stay in the EU for 90 days in any 180-day period. This allowed some Ukrainian emigrants to stay in the EU legally but without any additional registration. Often people relied on the help of relatives, acquaintances and professional and spontaneous volunteers. Despite the existence of common policies towards Ukrainian forced migrants, the domestic context of each country has its own specificities and shapes the different everyday practices and strategies of migrants from Ukraine. At the policy level, a detailed and in-depth understanding of these experiences acquires particular weight for subsequent management steps to be taken in the context of competition for labour and for finding balanced solutions between the policy of integrating Ukrainian migrants into the labour markets of host countries and Ukraine's desire to bring its citizens back.

Ukrainian migration is a European and, in a sense, an EU phenomenon. Firstly, Ukrainian nationals constitute one of the largest foreign-nationals group in the EU member states. Secondly, since 2017, Ukrainian holders of biometric passports have been exempt from the visa obligation for short-term stay in the Schengen zone. Hence, many Ukrainians had personal experience in crossing the Schengen border which proved crucial when they decided to escape. Thirdly, Ukraine is also a multi-national and quite diverse society and many Ukrainian residents of different citizenships have also left the country as a result of war. In this context, much more research is needed to study the complex and fluctuating responses of the EU member states to forced migration from Ukraine and to de-centre this research by also examining the role of local communities, the Ukrainian diaspora and the civil society. Maja Łysienia's article in this section shows how, in practice, the implementation of the EU temporary protection legislation into the national legislation looks like.

Note

1. Before the full-scale invasion, the Ukrainian government estimated the Ukrainian population (excluding the occupied territories of the Crimean Peninsula and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts) at 37.3 million people (Ukrainska Pravda 2020). These data were obtained using the following methods: collecting anonymous information from mobile operators about the number of users and their location; collecting data from registers of children (Civil Registry Office) and pensioners

(Pension Fund); and 'calibrating' sociological surveys, i.e., clarifying how many sim cards there are on average per Ukrainian in different groups. The data only allowed us to estimate the approximate number of people but are not really a census. According to the State Statistics Service, as of 1 February 2022, the population of the country was 41,167,300 people, excluding the occupied Crimea (Derzhavna Sluzhba Statystyky Ukrainy 2021). The difference in the figures is also due to the fact that the State Statistics Service data include the population in the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk occupied in 2014. According to Eurostat, the population of Ukraine as of 1 January 2022 was 40,997,689 people (Eurostat 2023b). Eurostat's calculations are based on data on the resident population of a country or, if this information is not available, on data on legal and registered residents. The long-term absence of a population census in Ukraine already makes it difficult to assess the scale of the demographic consequences of the war and forced migration (both internal and external) and is a future-oriented problem.

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Refugees, IDPs or just Ukrainians? Local Online Media and Perceptions of Donbas Internally Displaced Persons (2014–2018)

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The purpose of this paper is to define, through content and frame analysis, the peculiarities in the representation of Ukrainian internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine's local media and to compare this case with previous findings about the general peculiarities of perceptions of IDPs in the mass media. Two Ukrainian news sites were studied (2014–2018), giving a total 328 news items. My study revealed that the mass media do not differentiate between the terms 'refugee' and IDP and describe these latter as passive people (174 mentions as opposed to 77 mentions for active people). However, in the Ukrainian case, IDPs were in the top three of the most popular sources at the beginning of the resettlement (2014–2015). Later, the coverage became an episodic one, with publications about the topic typically having only one source – officials. The mass media preferred such frames as: 'generalisation', 'victim' and 'help-receiver'. The 'threat' frame was less often used; however, some aggressive and manipulative phrases were disseminated. A 'criminal' frame was not at all popular. Thus, the local press may be an important forum for IDPs; Ukrainian journalists were interested in their stories although the coverage needs some improvement (a more 'active' angle, clear reference to IDPs as IDPs and not refugees and stories of socialisation etc.).

Keywords: Ukrainian migrants, Ukrainian mass media, IDPs, news sources, internet-journalism

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Introduction

Ukrainian IDPs are people who had to leave their homes because of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which began in February 2014.[1] Since 21 November 2013, there have been Euromaidan (or Revolution of Dignity) protests, as a result of which the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych, fled to Russia and the Ukrainian parliament voted to remove him from power. The head of parliament, Oleksandr Turchynov, was appointed as Acting President. For pro-Kremlin propaganda, it was an opportunity to show Ukraine as a divided nation, with Donbas (the Donetsk and Luhansk regions) and Crimea being in the danger zone because of some mythical 'Maidan Nazis' and the Ukrainian government seen as a 'junta'. Any 'defense of Russian-speaking people' became a justification for the aggression. In February 2014, Russia annexed Crimea. In March, in the cities and towns of Donbas, numerous pro-Russian meetings were held and Russian-backed separatists proclaimed the formation of Donetsk and Luhansk as People's Republics. In April of that year, the separatists attacked and, in some cases, took over administrative buildings while Russian saboteurs seized several cities.

The National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine declared an Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO).[2] There was a debate in Ukrainian society about declaring war on Russia. However, an ATO was chosen in order to hold presidential elections. The ATO was conducted until April 2018, after which it was re-named the Operation of United Forces (OUF), with neither definition including the word 'war'. This also led to some speculation about the interpretation of the events and the roles of the different sides. For IDPs, it meant the uncertainty of their status. In Ukrainian society and the mass media, several terms were used: 'refugees', 'migrants' or just 'Donbas inhabitants'. Thus, it was not clear who these people were, how they and the locals could co-exist or whether they had any legal status. Nor was there an unambiguous understanding of their motives to leave: was it war, political persecution or possible repressions, economic motives (to get a pension, for example) or maybe even a degree of espionage for the separatists? Therefore it is important to discover how Ukrainian IDPs were represented, how their image was portrayed in the mass media and which frames were used by journalists in this situation of total uncertainty (not the war itself but an 'operation').

According to official data from the Ministry of Social Policy in March 2021, there were 1,461,822 registered IDPs in Ukraine. However, the number of unregistered migrants was much higher. For Ukraine it was 'an unprecedented exodus of civilians from the conflict-affected territories' (Ivashchenko-Stadnik 2017: 26). Ukraine was a country with one of the highest numbers of IDPs (Sasse 2017). In Ukrainian legislation, migrants in Donbas and Crimea are defined as internally displaced persons (IDPs), with their rights and freedoms guaranteed. Article 14 of the Law of Ukraine 'On ensuring the rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons' forbids discrimination on the grounds of status. The mass media, especially locally, may be extremely helpful in their coverage of IDPs' rights and freedoms and their integration into new communities. Journalists may control local authorities, help IDPs with their resettlement and provide useful information for both IDPs and the local inhabitants who want to support them. However, according to several migration studies, journalists often portray migrants incorrectly through, for example, discrimination, stereotypes and even hate speech (Don and Lee 2014; Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil and Baker 2008; Lueck, Due and Augoustinos 2015; Mihelj 2004; Santa Ana 1999). In modern scientific discourse there is still a lack of research about the IDPs' representation in the mass media (Apuke and Tunca 2019) and, as a rule, not local but national mass media outlets are used. In my research, I study the representation of Ukrainian IDPs in the regional press. Additionally, with a relatively large corpus of texts (328 publications over five years) it will be possible to see how the image of Ukrainian IDPs was formed, which techniques to portray IDPs were used and whether they changed over time.

It should be taken into account that Ukrainian regional journalism has some weaknesses. Ukrainian professional media organisations stress the local mass media's violation of professional standards, dependence

on government and local authorities, lack of professional journalists, cases of pro-Russian propaganda and coverage of the dissemination of political advertising (see POID 2021), together with research by the mass media in Eastern and Southern Ukraine (IMI 2021). Therefore, it is important to discover whether the Ukrainian local mass media spread prejudices and stereotypes about IDPs or whether their coverage is correct and neutral.

The Ukrainian case has somehow remained almost invisible to the Western mainstream press (Ramasubramanian and Miles 2018). Nor has it been studied in depth in scientific discourse; the current Russian-Ukrainian war, Russian propaganda and Russian geopolitical ambitions are more popular for scholars. Bearing this in mind, it is vital to observe IDPs' image formation and transformation over a significant period of time. Are there any changes in representation and framing? Additionally, the local press is the focus of this research, because it is a crucial in terms of community integration (Nielsen 2015). Therefore, the media may see IDPs differently (not international or all-national mass media, which are usually analysed by media researchers). Local media may introduce migrants as equal members of local communities or may deepen the division between them. As Ivashchenko-Stadnik (2017: 30) wrote: 'IDPs need more support from the host community. In order to get access to more resources, they need credibility to be accepted by the locals. In that respect, host communities cannot be underestimated as potentially powerful agents of change in IDPs' new lives'. Of course, local mass media are also crucial for covering IDPs problems, encouraging host-community assistance and forming credible images etc.

Thus, in this article, two popular local news outlets from Kharkiv and Dnipro – atn.ua and 056.ua – are analysed between April 2014 and December 2018 (328 news items). These regions hosted the largest numbers of the migrants, except for the Lugansk and Donetsk regions, where the war has been ongoing. In this article, I define some similarities between the Ukrainian case and previous research about the general peculiarities of the representation of IDPs (mass media attention to IDPs, definitions of IDPs, IDPs' roles). However, there are also some differences in their image: journalists often use them as news sources and give preference to the generalisation of IDPs as a 'mass', 'victims' and 'help-receivers'.

Since 2014, the problem of IDPs' coverage by the Ukrainian mass media has been revealed predominantly in media critics and reports by Ukrainian NGOs. In some cases, content analysis was used and some important observations about the specifics of coverage were made. However, there is a lack of systematic research in which the mass media were studied over a long period of time, with several aspects of the coverage taken into account (the presence of the topic or particular instances of the violation of professional standards were reported as a rule). Therefore, this paper also aims to fill this gap and answer several research questions:

- local mass media attention on IDPs – Are there any changes over time in the local mass media's attention to IDPs?
- What definitions have been used for IDPs in the media both at the start of Russian aggression and later?
- How are IDPs represented, what news sources are used and what frames were the most popular during 2014–2018?

IDPs, state policies and the mass media

Weiss and Korn (2006: 14), when comparing different types of migrant, call IDPs 'the most vulnerable of the vulnerable'. According to these researchers, people who cross an international border – whether fleeing from war, from military conflict or from political persecution – may feel safe, because they can gain refugee status and, as a result, international help; whereas IDPs remaining in the country may experience obstacles or even threats from their government (2006: 14). This is why state policy towards IDPs is extremely important.

Nowadays the governments are recommended to take 12 steps (Guiding Principles) to protect and assist IDPs (from collecting the correct data about them to designing a state policy and appointing special institutions and officials). However, there must be some pillars to uphold such the policy.

Firstly, scholars propose the 'sovereignty as responsibility' principle (Cohen and Deng 2012; Weiss and Korn 2006). A state must be responsible for its citizens and IDPs in particular. 'A state should not be able to claim the prerogatives of sovereignty unless it carries out its internationally recognized responsibilities to its citizens, which consist of providing them with protection and life-supporting assistance' (Cohen and Deng 2012: 7). A state should care about IDPs' needs (Korn 2001), regulate 'relations between the displaced and the host community' (Christensen and Harild 2009: 5), establish fair norms for IDPs in order for them not to 'suffer opprobrium and sanctions' (Weiss and Korn 2006: 6) and be 'perceived as the enemy' (Cohen and Deng 2012: 6). The correction of 'social injustices' towards IDPs must be a priority (Koch 2015: 138). Of course, security problems for IDPs (threats to their well-being and even life) must also be resolved.

Secondly, the 'humanitarian rights agenda' (Hoffman and Weiss 2017: 23) in the case of IDPs should be considered. Governments or volunteers may provide IDPs with basic needs – nutrition, medicine, etc.; however, this is not enough. According to the statistics, 'the majority of the IDPs are women and children' (Korn 2001: 14) who sometimes cannot defend themselves. Thus, it is important for a state to be 'responsible for the human rights of its citizens [IDPs] as part of the essence of statehood' (Weiss and Korn 2006: 3).

Thirdly, it is the concept of 'critical humanitarism' which establishes relations 'between the providers and recipients'. The relations should be 'based on an ethic of care by the former that is recognized by the latter' (Hoffman and Weiss 2017: 25). Here, temptation may occur for 'the providers' to use IDPs for self-promotion – to generalise IDPs' positive attitudes towards the government, politicians and volunteers and to ignore their real problems.

Finally, it is a long-term policy or 'durable solutions' (Christensen and Harild 2009: 12) for IDPs. There is a disputable issue of when the problem of displacement will be resolved. Often, internal migration is perceived as 'a temporary problem, one that will disappear with the return or resettlement of the displaced' (Korn 2001: 17). However, this is not true. Resettlement, the end of a military conflict and the return of the IDPs may not be solutions: displacement only ends when (former) IDPs or refugees no longer have needs that are specifically linked to their having been displaced' (Christensen and Harild 2009: 13).

The attention of society, NGO activity and qualitative mass media coverage are extremely important in forming policy toward IDPs. In several countries, NGOs, volunteers and the mass media all drew attention to IDPs and their problems, whereas government responses were weak (Solod'ko and Doronyuk 2015). Pressure from society is important in order to encourage politicians and officials to act – and journalists should provide complete, accurate and objective information about a conflict and its consequences. Additionally, biased reporting of internal migration has 'a strong potential to shape both civil and state responses to IDPs' situation and influence policy decisions' (Bulakh 2017: 55).

Hoffman and Weiss (2017) came up with several functions for journalists who cover conflicts: to inform about possible cases of disaster, atrocities, hostile forces and war criminals; to provide data about possible victims of forces and criminals, to report on the activities of volunteers, organisations and agencies who help vulnerable groups, block hate speech and reveal disinformation, fakes etc. However, the main objective for the mass media is 'the construction of the humanitarian narrative – the stories about means and ends, successes and failures... [providing an explanation] why there is an "emergency"' and the logic driving humanitarian behaviour (Hoffman and Weiss 2017: 212). There may also be some problems in that the mass media may violate professional standards and use the topic of IDPs in their own interest: 'to be markets of misery' and 'to profit from pain' (Hoffman and Weiss 2017: 217). Sometimes the mass media were just not ready to cover these issues (Kacharava and Gvineria 2014: 23), which is why mistakes occur. However, sometimes it may

just be an unwillingness to perceive IDPs as equal human beings – people who have the same citizenship, the same rights and the same obligations as the rest of society.

Usually there are similarities between IDPs and locals because they are compatriots, thus empathy should be present in that the locals should know the context of the replacement and IDPs' motives for fleeing their homes. However, scholars who study IDPs' representation in the mass media of different continents and countries defined some bias and violation of professional standards. It is, of course, important to monitor the mass media for such violation, because it may lead to manipulative, incomplete coverage and, as a result, to discrimination against IDPs. Scholars from different countries highlight some basic violations in the topic's coverage. In many countries the mass media focus on help-giving and an exaggeration of governments' assistance. 'Help-giving' reports dominated in Kenya (Apuke and Tunca 2019: 171) and Azerbaijan, where journalists mainly covered 'the government policies and measures taken to improve the living conditions of displaced persons' (Arslan, Bobghiashvili, Djafarova and Hovhannisyan 2018: 27–28). Governments were also the prominent news source in the journalistic texts on the internally displaced persons from Swat (Hussain 2016). According to the observations from Georgia, the country's mass media mostly failed to 'focus on context, which includes the terms and lived effects of assistance programs', whereby, often, only pictures of help-giving prevailed (Koch 2015: 141). Additionally, political regimes may influence mass-media coverage. For instance, in Azerbaijan the state influenced the representation of the topic of IDPs (Makaryan and Chobanyan 2014). When describing occasions of help-giving, the use of images of IDPs in political game-playing may be observed. Scholars found that the coverage of of information on IDPs depends on mass-media ownership. Government mass media more frequently quoted officials, whereas private media portray IDPs as 'victims' (Apuke and Tunca 2019; Isola and Toba 2019). The private mass media may use IDPs' images in their own interests – for instance, to harm government positive representations (Apuke and Tunca 2021). Sometimes IDPs may be used to gain international financing (Koch 2012: 17), as 'a tool for political maneuvers' (Sammut 2001: 55) or to 'exploit the displaced population as visual reminders of victimization, even at the cost of prolonging their hardship' (Bacon and Lynch 2003: 66).

Let's differentiate the major peculiarities in the representation IDPs:

1. The generalisation of the situation for IDPs and ignorance of their voices and perspectives are also observed. Journalists use generalisations and stereotypes (Dunkan 2005). There are many observations about the ignorance of the 'daily hardships of displaced persons' (Arslan *et al.* 2018: 27–28) and their voice is not present in discussions about their future (Bruckner 2009); IDPs are not often quoted (Arslan *et al.* 2018).
2. IDPs may be represented as victims: helpless and having diseases (Ibrahim and Gujbawu 2017). Images of 'miserable' IDPs and IDPs in need are used in official discourses (Gureyeva-Aliyeva and Huseynov 2011). As Bulakh (2017: 51) writes, compassion for IDPs as victims 'overshadows the prejudice and stereotypes about them'. IDPs' passiveness is one more result of such a representation. If governments and other organisations are constantly shown as help-givers and IDPs cannot speak for themselves, their 'passive mentality' is also portrayed in the mass media and society (Koch 2012: 19).
3. IDPs are described as an obstacle. Journalists may refer to IDPs as 'our compatriots'; however, 'marginalization and exclusion' and 'de-personalization' were also observed (Arslan *et al.* 2018: 28). This occurred in some cases because of the assistance IDPs receive from the government and international organisations. For instance, in post-Soviet countries, where poverty was extremely high, IDPs receiving international and government assistance were criticised (Najafizadeh 2013). Sometimes IDPs were presented as an obstacle to the prosperity of communities in which they were settled, with journalism showing them as 'a problem' for the community (Harris-Brandts and Sichinava 2021).

Researchers also mentioned some positive features of the topic's coverage. In Ukraine, IDPs were perceived as 'semi-fellows and semi-citizens' (Ivashchenko-Stadnik 2017: 42) and 'our fellow citizens' (Bulakh 2017: 52). Thus, they were not 'heavily labelled as distant or unknown Others' (Bulakh 2017: 53), like migrants or refugees from distant countries. IDPs tended to benefit from 'powerful support within society by informal networks and volunteer groups, which united the efforts of locals and the displaced in an attempt to assist adaptation and new infrastructural challenges' (Sereda 2018: 128).

However, there were some prejudices, too. The image of IDPs in society and in the mass media may transform the status quo – for instance, at first some Ukrainians volunteered to help IDPs whereas, later, there were 'unfavorable comments about IDPs, which was also the case in media publications' (Bulakh 2017: 51). Scholars also mentioned this transformation of how IDPs are perceived: from a positive perception of 'IDPs as victims, they need assistance' to negative 'fake IDPs' (Rimpiläinen 2020: 483) or criminals (Bulakh 2017: 54).

After differentiating between the possible violations of the coverage of the topic of IDPs in the mass media, we now analyse the context of Ukrainian internal migration and the government's action. Researchers claim that Ukrainian government support was 'minimal' (Kuznestsova, Mikheieva, Mykhnenko and Gulyieva 2018), especially at the beginning of their resettlement. Afterwards, there was 'a lack of systematic work and logic' and government officials failed to coordinate the actions of different organisations and institutions (Solod'ko and Doronyuk 2015: 9). Furthermore, there was low trust in the government by IDPs; their negative experiences with official institutions were also mentioned (Mikheieva and Sereda 2015). The state did not play a leading role during the resettlement procedure and IDPs usually had to rely on their connections, friends and relatives (Mikheieva and Sereda 2015; Sasse 2017) and they did not influence state policy (Bazaluk and Balinchenko 2020; Solod'ko and Doronyuk 2015). As a rule, the international and Ukrainian mass media simply ignored them (Sasse 2017). However, there were numerous problems to cover:

- 'Multiple forms of social exclusion' of IDPs in Ukraine were discovered (Kuznetsova and Mikheieva 2020: 701); IDPs did not enjoy 'full citizenship' (Urbinati 2021).
- IDPs were not represented in legislative organs and were not able to take part in elections; there were obstacles to their free movement within the country, their document recovery, pensions and social payments; the mass media and other sources published no information about opportunities for IDPs such as international support; and local authorities' actions were not transparent (Platform of Civil Society Ukraine 2017).
- There were cases of discrimination during the search for housing and employment (Mikheieva and Sereda 2015).
- IDPs were paid less because of their status – 'the average salary for displaced women was half that of non-IDP women' (Kuznetsova and Mikheieva 2020: 691).
- IDPs experienced 'extreme difficulties in registering in their new place of residence', thus, it was almost impossible for them to gain access to secondary education and healthcare (Kuznestsova *et al.* 2018: 10).
- Special campaigns to promote the tolerant treatment of IDPs were organised (Smal and Poznyak 2016).

Although IDPs were under-represented in state discourse, in the mass media they were perceived as a single 'mass' and were generalised, i.e. 'constructed as a homogenous group rather than a diverse range of people, who face different issues and who have a wide range of needs' (Kuznetsova and Mikheieva 2020: 690). However, the most disturbing point concerned the mass media's creation of a fake differentiation between locals and IDPs on the basis of the latter's attitudes to the aggressor – the Russian Federation. Sociologists

observed some recurring stereotypes (that IDPs were pro-Russian and believed in the so-called '*Russkiy Mir*' / 'Russian World' (Voytyuk 2019).

As we know, the conception of the Russian world defines everyone who speaks the Russian language as being a part of this world: scholars define it as 'an imagined community based on the markers of the Russian language, the Russian culture and the common glorious past', a concept of Russian 'soft power' (Feklyunina 2016: 773). Moreover, according to numerous statements by Putin and other Russian officials, Russia should 'defend' the Russian-speaking population, even outside the borders of the Russian Federation. Thus, the people of Donbas also suffered because of this. Russian aggression stole their homes and sometimes members of their families; however, in the territories controlled by Ukraine, they were perceived as members of the Russian world – people who caused the war.

There were numerous speculations about IDPs, who 'were not able to defend Ukraine' (Bulakh 2017: 54), who were 'potential supporters of the separatists' (Kuznetsova and Mikheieva 2020: 690). IDPs and people from Donbas were perceived as 'hostile', in that Ukrainian society believed that Russian aggression was possible because of significant help from or collaboration 'by the locals' (Ivashchenko-Stadnik 2017: 27–28). Male IDPs, in particular, suffered because of such an attitude (Bulakh 2017: 54). State officials contributed to the creation of this 'pro-Russian image' by asking about IDPs' 'inclusion in the national community when checking on their status' (Urbinati 2021: 4–5), putting 'a marker of displacement' on them (Bazaluk and Balinchenko 2020: 11). IDPs (journalists in particular) mentioned to the sociologists that they did not feel part of a Ukrainian media nation (Voronova 2020). Thus, IDPs were the targets of the Kremlin information war as well. For years, Russian propaganda divided Ukraine into 'Russian' and 'Western' territories and denied Ukrainian sovereignty. Donbas, in this imaginary scenario, was definitely 'Russian', which is why, sometimes, it was extremely hard for some Ukrainian mass media and members of Ukrainian society to see a different picture – that of people from Donbas, who want to be Ukrainian citizens as well, who speak Ukrainian and share a Ukrainian identity. However, images of IDPs who may support separatists and are ready to ask Putin to save them, seemed to be more believable.

Thus, internal displacement was a challenge for both 'those who have been "on the move" or resettled and an unparalleled challenge for those who remain rooted in the host communities' (Ivashchenko-Stadnik 2017: 29).

Where IDPs *are* compatriots, they usually prompt positive attitudes. However, these positive attitudes may change over time. Thus, for the mass media, it is important to verify cases of negative images, threat metaphors and the spreading of crime reports.

There is always some exaggeration of government and officials' assistance to IDPs, whereas IDPs' actions and their real problems are ignored. As a rule, 'the receivers' do not see the individual stories of IDPs and deal with them '*en masse*' – i.e., lumping them together. Thus, there may be some problems with the balance and completeness of journalistic material: officials may be the newsmakers more often than IDPs. According to numerous observations, the government's assistance was minimal in the beginning, so it is also interesting to see, now, whether official sources commented on the situation at the beginning and whether the number of these comments increased over time. Here, officials' structural failure to solve IDPs' problems and cases of IDPs facing discrimination may not be so visible in journalistic outputs.

Speculations about IDPs' pro-Russian orientation and government and mass-media intentions to differentiate locals and IDPs should also be scrutinised and the numerous approaches to show IDPs as passive victims should be observed.

As for the mass-media representation of IDPs, especially in the local media, there is episodic systematic research. Moreover, at the same time, there are numerous examples of the violation of professional standards in journalistic texts on the topic that were observed by media critics and professional media organisations

(Institute of Mass Information, Detector Media published such pieces). Therefore, the contribution of this study is to define the peculiarities of the coverage of this topic in the Ukrainian local media.

Of course, every case of internal displacement is different; however, some similarities between Ukraine and other countries may be seen. As previously mentioned, IDPs are rarely quoted in the mass media, although the Ukrainian case is different. Previous research has shown that, in the regions of Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv, which are closer to the ATO zone, the mass media quite often used IDPs as a source; however, in other Ukrainian regions (Odesa, Mykolayiv and Kherson), officials and locals prevailed (see Steblyna 2015a). Thus, distance may matter. In neighbouring regions, journalists more often perceive IDPs as 'internal others' (Lueck *et al.* 2015), so the opinions of IDPs seem to be important. Approaches showing them as dangerous, as an obstacle, are rare.

Research objectives and questions

A review of the literature shows that there are some specifics of IDPs' representation in the mass media. IDPs usually get positive coverage – with approaches showing them as dangerous being minimal – and they are perceived as being quite similar to local inhabitants. However, some violations of professional standards may occur. There may be a tendency to show IDPs in a more negative context: as criminals or as obstacles, especially over time. Stereotypes, generalisations, a lack of context and a tendency to show them as helpless victims may also be used. To see the peculiarities of the Ukrainian case covered by the local press, these observations by scholars will be verified. Therefore, the research questions will be as follows:

RQ1 Does the local mass media focus on IDPs only during the 'hot phase of the military conflict?' In Ukraine there were many ceasefire agreements. However, the 'hot' phase was considered to be between 2014 and 2015, before the Minsk-2 agreements.

RQ2 Does the local mass media differentiate between the types – 'migrants', 'refugees' and 'IDPs'?

RQ3 Does the local mass media show IDPs predominantly as passive ('people who provided help', 'people who need assistance')?

RQ4 Do officials and locals dominate in news texts about IDPs?

RQ5 Is the coverage of IDPs unbiased? As was mentioned earlier, there are basic violations of IDP coverage, which may lead to discriminatory or manipulatory coverage: the focus on help-giving, generalisations, the representation of IDPs as victims and obstacles (like criminals or a burden or other danger to communities, especially being 'pro-Russian' and having some sympathy with separatists etc.). To answer this question, media frames and frequency will be taken into account: 'generalisation/IDPs *en masse*'; 'victims'; 'help-receivers', a 'burden/danger' and 'criminals'.

The research objectives will be as follows:

- to analyse mass-media attention to IDPs between 2014 and 2018 (both before and after the Minsk-2 agreements);
- to explore mass-media definitions of IDPs;
- to determine IDPs' roles as active or passive characters in mass-media texts;
- to define leading news sources in texts; and
- to distinguish IDPs' biased characteristics (with the help of the frames).

As for the frames, several of them will be used, according to the specifics of the coverage defined earlier.

1. A help-giving frame, to check the objectivity of the local mass media in their coverage of 'the providers' – how often the frame occurs, who is giving help (officials, volunteers, locals), how the IDPs are represented in a particular situation and can they comment on the situation of help-giving? Maybe IDPs are represented as people who are ready to help themselves? Here the most-common manipulations about IDPs will be analysed: their usage in so-called 'jeansa' publications – covered political advertisements. For 'jeansa' identification, a Pylyp Orlyk Institute for Democracy (POID) methodology will be used, as designed by leading professional media organisations which monitor mass-media content in Ukraine (see POID 2021).
2. Generalisation frame: to see if the local mass media are capable of solving the problem of the invisibility of IDPs – are IDPs presented en masse or is the local mass media capable of perceiving them as individuals?
3. Victim frame – to discover the completeness of IDPs' representation. Yes, it is important to describe all the hardships of displacement; however, IDPs are not only passive victims who suffer – they may have other roles, such as starting their life again in a new place.
4. Burden, danger frame – to analyse mass-media metaphors and comments about IDPs: are they represented as an obstacle to the community or do journalists see their successful socialisation?
5. Crime frame – how often are IDPs present in the crime chronical?

With these frames it will be possible to check whether or not the local mass media were ready to overturn the most-detrimental cases of IDPs' representation.

Material and methodology

This study uses content and frame analysis, conducted between 6 April (the beginning of the ATO) and 31 December 2018, based on two prominent local news sites in Eastern Ukraine – Kharkiv and Dnipro. These regions hosted the largest number of IDPs (because of their closeness to the ATO), except for the state-controlled territories of Donetsk oblast (550,000) and Luhansk oblast (290,000). Kharkiv oblast hosted 128,000 people and Dnipropetrovsk 75,000 (Slovo i dilo 2018). The news sites of Donetsk and Luhansk were not picked for the analysis because, at the beginning of the ATO, some editorial offices migrated from the occupied cities and pro-Russian separatists took over some offices.

Some similarities may be found between the inhabitants of the Donetsk/Luhansk and Kharkiv /Dnipro regions. Eastern Ukraine is predominantly known as a Russian-speaking region. The former Ukrainian president Yanukovych and his Party of Regions had the largest number of voters there during the 2010 elections. Ukraine's integration into the EU was not so popular in Southern and Eastern Ukraine (only 31–33 per cent in favour), according to the results of an all-Ukrainian survey conducted in 2018 by Ukrainian sociologist organisations the Kiev International Institute of Sociology, Sociology Group Rating and the Razumkov Center (see Tolina 2018; and earlier research of this problem by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2016). Polls about attitudes towards Russia have shown that, in 2018, people of these regions had a predominantly positive attitude – 62 per cent in Southern Ukraine, 70 per cent in Eastern Ukraine (Pravda.com.ua 2018). Therefore, we can suppose that mass-media perceptions of the migrants might be more positive there.

The characteristics of analysed outlets

The criteria for the selection of news sites were their popularity, their focus on political and social news, publication of their content and whether or not they were created by staff journalists; relatively high marks were awarded for compliance with professional journalistic standards – POID data between 2015 and 2018 were used for the standards evaluation analysis (POID 2021). Two online media outlets were chosen:

- *Atn.ua* (Kharkiv). According to Similarweb data, the highest number of visits per month in the last 6 months was 323,000 (the population of the region was 2.6 million). It is the most popular local site in the region. The Ukrainian NGO Institute of Mass Information (IMI), in their media-ownership research, concluded that the site belongs to Arsen Avakov, the Ukrainian minister of Internal Affairs and a politician for the Narodnyi Front Party (Prokaeva 2015).
- *056.ua* (Dnipro). The highest number of visits per month was 462,000 (the population of the region was 3.2 million). It is one of the top five most popular sites. The site belongs to CitySites franchise and businessman Evhen Javtushenko is the Executive Director of the network (Vasina 2015). According to IMI research, politicians from the Party of Regions bought the franchise (the party belonged to the former Ukrainian president Yanucovych and is nowadays forbidden in Ukraine). These politicians influence the site's content (Sverdel 2015).

The selection of journalistic texts (sample)

As the period of this research is quite wide, the search option on the sites was used – tags '*pereselentsi*'/'migrants', '*bizhentsi*'/'refugees', 'Donbas' and Google search (*site:n*). Texts about refugees or migrants from other countries and historical texts about Ukrainian migration were all excluded from the list. Texts of all genres were analysed (news, blogs, interviews etc) and 328 items about Ukrainian IDPs were found on the two sites.

Methodology of the texts: content analysis

To define the peculiarities of the representation of Ukrainian internally displaced persons in the Ukrainian local media, the method of content analysis was used. According to van Dijk (2018: 232), 'Times, Place, Participants in various identities and roles are important', as are segments' position in the discourse (headline, lead, background), modalities ('what migrants must or may do'), implications and presuppositions and actor and action descriptions. Thus, for this paper, mass-media attention was measured and IDPs' definitions, modalities and roles in the texts were defined. To achieve this aim, summative content analysis was used, as it helps 'to investigate the usage of specific words', 'to discover underlying data meaning by quantifying words' (Hsiu-Fang and Shannon 2005: 1284).

At first, the number of texts per year was calculated and compared with the dynamics of the events at the front lines. Unequal attention to the topic (the large number of texts about IDPs during the hot phase at the front 2014–2015) means that they may be presented as a problem, as a burden to local communities. Little attention paid to them afterwards means that IDPs are under-represented in their communities.

Some Ukrainian professional media organisations published reports about the situation; however, their research was episodic. The observation periods were a week, a month or several months. The Pylyp Orlyk Institute for Democracy (POID) has been monitoring the topic since May 2017. According to their data, there were only 1 per cent of texts on IDPs in the regional press and online prior to 24 February 2022 (POID 2021).

Another organisation, the Institute of Mass Information (IMI), published several reports in 2016 and 2017. The authors concluded that, in 2016, 2 per cent of online and press reports, 4 per cent of TV broadcasts (IMI 2016) and, in 2017, 4 per cent of regional online texts and 5 per cent of TV broadcasts were about IDPs (IMI 2017a). Additionally, in 2015, research about IDPs was conducted by the Krym-SOS NGO in five Ukrainian cities and a few texts about IDPs were discovered (Prostir 2015). Thus, there is no research on the topic where large periods of time were studied; there are only a few observations about the little attention given to the topic in different Ukrainian regions during various periods of time. My research aims to solve this problem and to show the complete picture for at least two popular regional news outlets.

After the number of texts per year was calculated, participants in the texts were revealed, news sources were identified and definitions of IDPs were studied ('Ukrainians', 'the people from some Ukrainian region' '*pereselentsi*'/'migrants'; '*bizhentsi*'/'refugees'). The modalities were defined in general: either active IDPs – who can solve their own problems and be a part of their new community – or passive IDPs, who are unable to deal with their own problems and constantly rely on assistance.

Again, there were observations about the roles, the news sources and definitions of IDPs. For instance, in 2017, several Odesa mass-media outlets were studied and there were examples of both: '*pereselentsi*'/'migrants' and '*bizhentsi*'/'refugees'. The IDPs were portrayed mostly as passive (Steblyna 2017). The same problems were found in the Lviv region (Dovzhenko 2017). In 2015, the mass media in Southern Ukraine were studied: IDPs were not predominantly used as news sources, with IDPs from Crimea being the exception. The mass media from Kherson quoted their leaders, journalists and activists (Steblyna 2015b). Krym-SOS monitoring also showed that IDPs were predominantly described as passive (Prostir 2015). Thus, there are observations for some regions and mass media, however any systematic research is lacking. Furthermore, the dynamics of the situation were not studied – for instance, is there any difference in describing IDPs as active or as passive or are there any changes in the selection of news sources?

Lastly, IDPs' characteristics were studied using frame analysis, which helped to distinguish any biased representation of IDPs in the mass media. There were also numerous observations, predominantly made by professional mass-media organisations, about violations of professional standards in the regional mass media:

- IDPs were used in political propaganda or '*jeansa*' texts (Kolotvin 2017);
- negative attitudes about IDPs were formed (they 'caused' price increases and a rise in unemployment – Prostir 2015 – and poor service in hospitals – IMI 2016); some journalists spread fake news or provocations about IDPs (IMI 2017b);
- hate speech was mentioned; however, here IDPs were in 12th position compared to other objects of violation (IMI 2015); and
- there was speculation about IDPs receiving a lot of attention and help from different institutions, both international and local (Prostir 2015).

Thus, just a few isolated examples of violations of professional standards were shown. Only in the Krym-SOS study were typical mass-media mistakes gathered and described; however, the period was relatively short: 16 January–7 March 2015 (Prostir 2015). In my study, with the use of frame analysis, it will be possible to observe the main violations and their frequency from 2014 to 2018.

To conduct the research, several categories for the analysis were defined:

1. Number of texts per year.
2. Definitions ('*pereselentsi*'/'migrants' and '*bizhentsi*'/'refugees', 'the people from a certain city, town or region' or simply 'Ukrainians'). The texts from the sample were coded according to the definition used. Some texts contained two definitions, in which case the definition which was used first was considered.

3. Modalities of the IDPs. Two modalities were differentiated: active or passive. The texts were coded according to which verb was used with the definition (active or passive voice). The verb which was used first was considered.
4. Sources of information. The number of sources in the texts and the origins of the source were defined: officials – government, local authorities (both regional and city officials); international sources (governments or institutes), politicians (all-Ukrainian or local), activists, the police or state emergency services, the military, the mass media, experts, local people, volunteers and IDPs.
5. Frames.

Frame analysis

Here, frame analysis is understood as a form of content analysis, where frames (selection of certain phrases or characteristics) are elements of analysis. When studying the frames which were used and their frequency, it is possible to interpret the mass media's perception of a topic.

According to Entman (1993), framing is about 'selection' and 'salience': journalists prefer certain phrases and make these visible to their audiences using different techniques. However, some researchers claim that this popular definition leads to 'a conceptual fuzziness' and that, with this definition, it is hard to differentiate between framing, priming and agenda-setting. Thus, an alternative is proposed: to focus on 'equivalence-based definitions that are more directly tied to alterations in the presentation of information rather than the persuasive value of that information' (Cacciatore, Scheufele and Iyengar 2016). Therefore, the selection of certain news items is about agenda-setting and priming (Price and Tewksbury 1997). For instance, if the arrival of IDPs is considered to be newsworthy, this topic is published on the front page, whereas 'a story presentation' or 'the ways in which choices are presented to people' (Price and Tewksbury 1997: 182) are about framing. For example, journalists select arguments for and against IDPs' arrival in a certain place. According to Kahneman and Tversky (1984: 346), framing is 'a tool to demonstrate failures of invariance'. Elites, presenting the arguments and the choices in terms of ' losses and gains', influence society's perception of an issue. The locals' perceptions of IDPs is crucial as the latter need resources, assistance from the local authorities, jobs and places to live, etc. However, local elites may frame the IDPs' arrival according to their own interests and stress only the losses which will affect the community. Other elites use IDPs for self-promotion, thus society may be led to think that IDPs already have all their needs met by politicians or local authorities. In times of information overflow and high competitiveness for the media content, the elites' frames may just be accepted passively. Thus, a constant monitoring of such sensitive topics should be carried out to reconstruct the process of framing.

This is why framing analysis is widely used in migration studies. As Lahav and Courtemanche (2012: 484) claim, such analysis 'is key because immigration fears are often more subjective than objective'. Scholars may analyse 'metaphors, catchphrases, examples, visual images and statistics' to show this (Dekker and Scholten 2017: 208) and word choices and vocabularies are also discovered (Klein and Amis 2021). Collocates are used: 'words that appear near another word more often than could be expected by chance only' (Brouwer, van der Woude and van der Leun 2017). To identify frames, researchers study elements in the texts such as voices, problems, the attribution of roles, proposed solutions and calls for action (Roggeband and Vliegentha 2007: 8–9) or focus on language, reasoning or abstraction (Ransan-Cooper, Farbotko, McNamara, Thornton and Chevalier 2015).

However, occasionally methodological problems may occur. With an increasing number of studies of framing, a frame has become 'a quite abstract variable that is hard to identify and hard to code in content analysis' (Matthes and Kohring 2008: 258); thus, it is proposed to identify *some* elements of the frame (frame patterns) through hierarchical cluster analysis and not the frame as a whole. The researchers differentiate

between several frame elements: a problem definition, casual attribution, moral evaluation and a treatment (Matthes and Kohring 2008).

One further problem of modern frame analysis is data relevance. Nowadays, with a variety of possibilities of computer analysis, it is possible to use more data for longer periods of time. For instance, with collocational analysis, it is possible to show 'the choice of words to be used' – 'illegal' as an association with 'immigrant', for example (Gabrielatos and Baker 2008). Another possible option is concordance analysis, where the concordance is a 'list of a given word or word cluster with its co-text on either side' (Gabrielatos and Baker 2008: 15). With the methodology of computer analysis, studies have shown the usage of 'water metaphors' – (flood, pour, stream) and their distribution to refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants – and positive and negative treatments, according to the situation (Gabrielatos and Baker 2008: 22). Additionally, computer analysis helps to compare frames used in the mass media in different countries – for instance, with 16 different frames, national media discourses in 5 EU countries were compared (Heidenreich, Lind, Eberl and Boomgaarden 2019).

Thus, for text analysis, word selection was analysed (metaphors, IDPs' characteristics, words and phrases which appeared near IDPs in the texts, etc.) – 'a story presentation' (Price and Tewksbury, 1997: 182). Some of these findings may be used for future computer analysis (the role of IDPs, active/passive IDPs, news sources – see Table 1) to process more news texts and to avoid the problems of frame analysis.

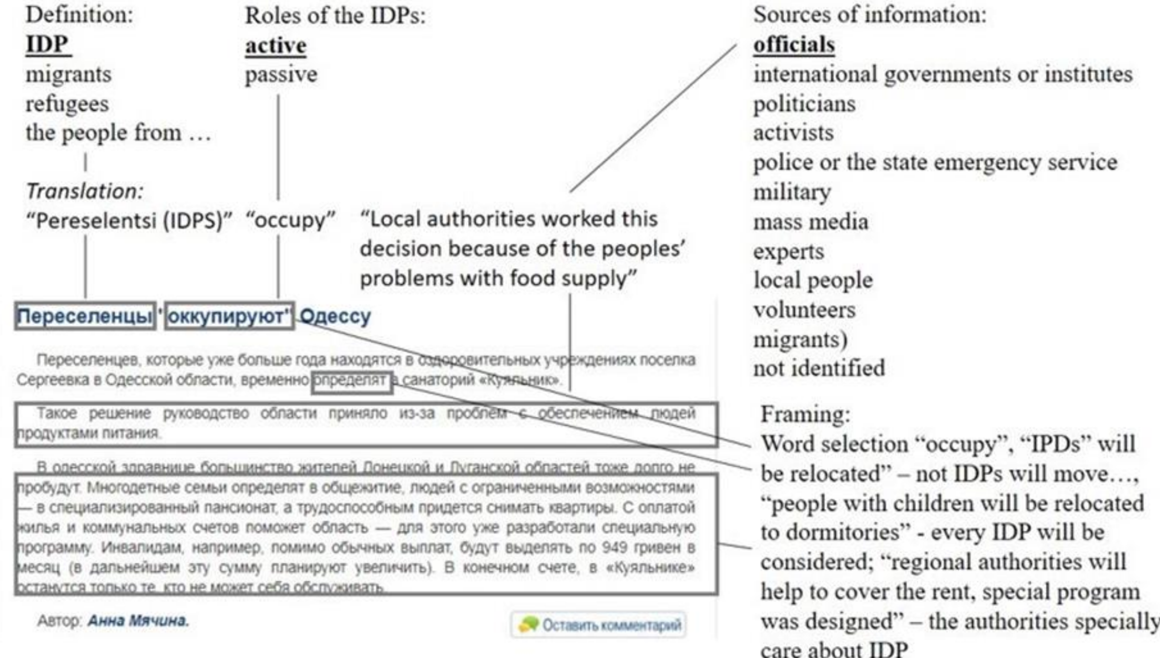
Table 1. Word selection and frames for the analysis

Word selection	Explanation	Frames
'tons of food', 'millions of hryvnias', 'millions/thousands of migrants'; 'number'of IDPs got 'number/amount' of aid; typologies (several types of migrant got several kinds of something); phrases 'all the IDPs', IDPs as objects (IDPs will be checked/relocated)	Not only aid or help but also emphasis on the size; Statistics about migrants without context, just facts and numbers	'generalisation/ IDPs *en masse*'
'people with TB', 'people who can't help themselves', 'poor people', 'desperate', 'sick', speculations about certain needs ('can't afford bread', 'can't find a job'), poor conditions	Not just different people with different backgrounds but judgments about some imaginative general characteristics	'victim'/ 'debased people'
local authorities transfer aid; locals organised a concert	The most typical scenes of help giving/receiving	'help-receivers'
'wave', 'flood', 'burden', 'occupation', 'explosion', 'people from Donetsk can't behave properly'; 'pro-Russian', 'inadequate', 'social explosion'	Generalisation metaphors; exaggerations; not just fact statement; speculations, judgments; typical threat metaphors	'burden'/'danger'
'an IDP attacked a local inhabitant'	Cases about crimes; mentions of IDP status without justification	criminals

Word selection and frames for the analysis

The matrix for the analysis is represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Matrix for the analysis



Source: author's compilation.

At first, *definitions* of IDPs in the text were considered, after which the *roles of IDPs* and *sources of information* were determined. Eventually, word selection was analysed for the identification of *frames*. Figure 1 is an example of a text with the headline 'IDPs occupy Odesa'; thus, the definition is 'IDP', the role 'active'. In the text, a journalist refers to an official's decision, so the source of information is 'officials'. As for word selection, the author uses 'burden'/'danger', generalisations and help-giving frames. As 'burden'/'danger' was the first frame, it was considered for the general count.

Thus, with both content and frame analysis, it should be possible to answer all the research questions and, in particular, to understand when texts about the topic were predominantly published, which definitions were used, which roles of IDPs were exploited and which news sources and frames dominated. With the results, the peculiarities of IDPs' representation will be revealed.

Results: Ukrainian IDPs in online local mass media

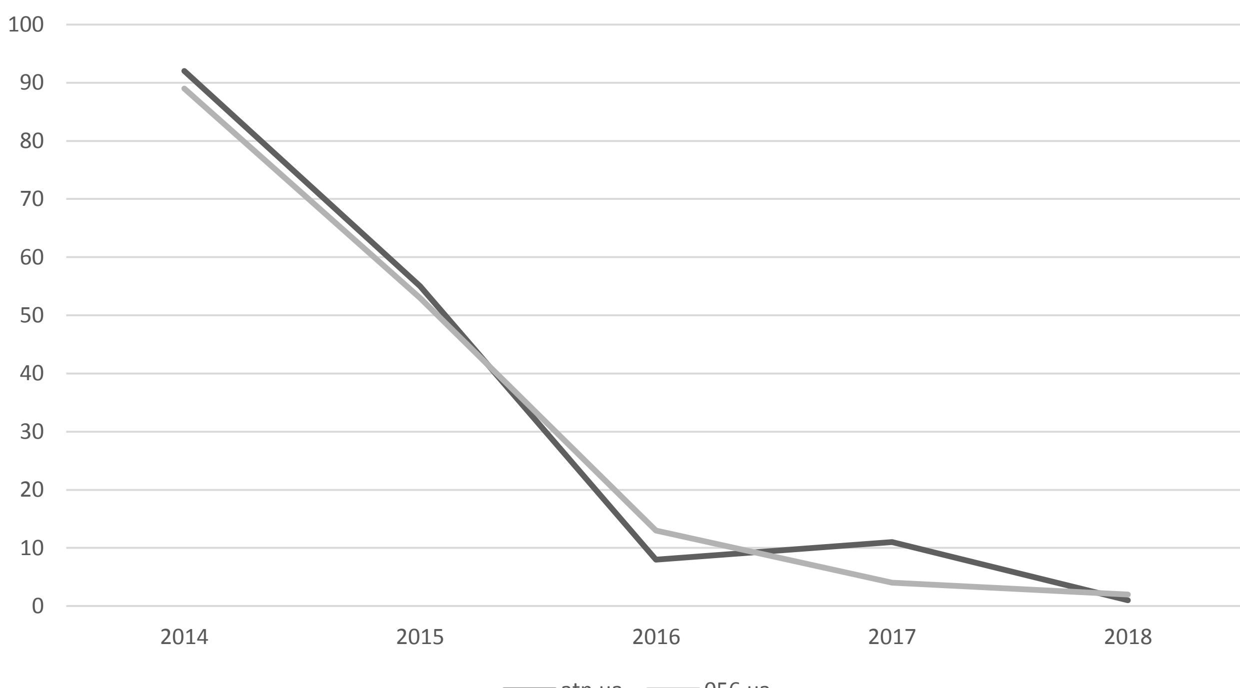
Nowadays the Ukrainian local mass media face many problems: Soviet traditions of dependence on local authorities, the lack of financing and staff and the questionable quality of journalistic publications. After the Russian aggression in 2014, with internal migration as its cause, several international programmes were launched for journalists to cover IDPs' problems, success stories and useful information. Nevertheless, initially journalists had to invent their own vocabulary to describe the new reality of war and of people from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions who were leaving their native lands because of bombing and persecutions. Of course,

mass-media professionals used to work with contradictable and overwhelming information covering both Russian aggression and internal migration. Let us begin with the analysis of text numbers and IDP definitions.

IDPs: refugees or people?

A significant decrease in attention paid to migrants as a topic between 2014 and 2018 can be observed (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Number of texts about migrants

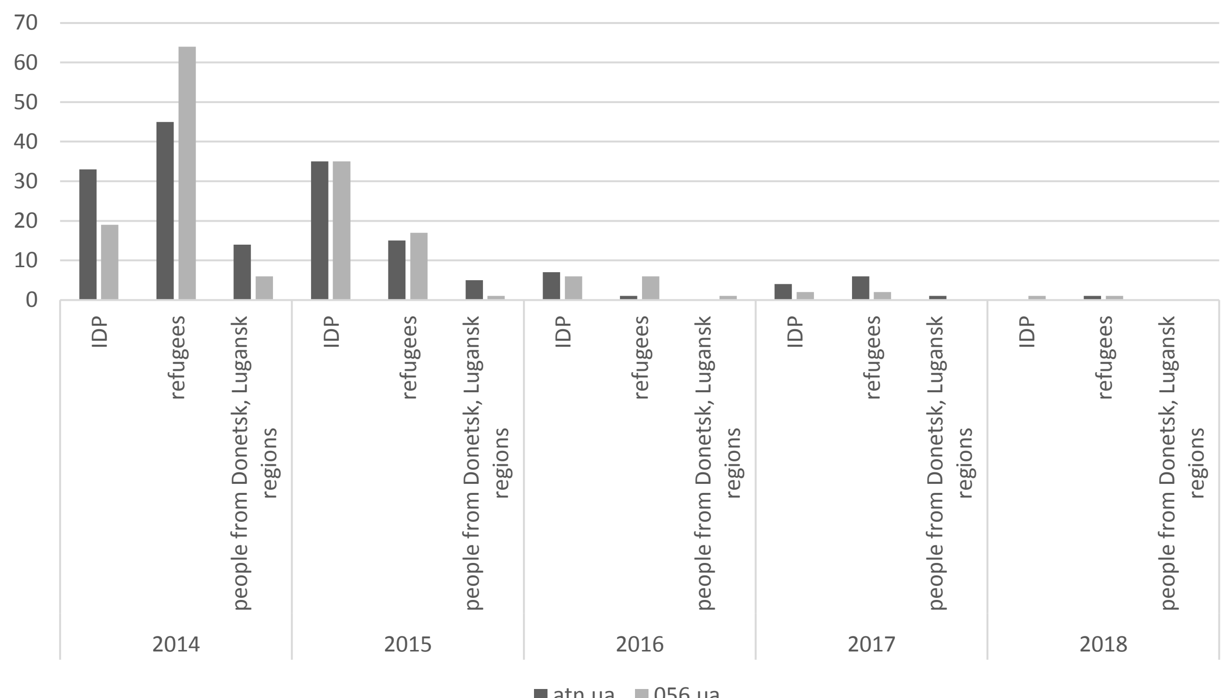


Source: author's compilation.

During the 'hot' phase, the mass media published the largest number of texts, so RQ1 is confirmed. Journalists covered the topic of when IDPs moved into their communities; however, the migrants' problems afterwards are not so closely observed: 8–13 texts per year in 2016 and just 1–2 texts in 2018. So, we may suppose that the local mass media do not pay enough attention to internal migration as a long-term problem.

As for definitions, with time, the IDPs' characterisation did not change much. Of course, both the annexation of Crimea and the war on Donbas were hard to predict, so Ukrainian journalists were not ready to write about the war and migrants. There were many discussions about suitable words and phrases. With the first 'wave' of the texts about IDPs in 2014, *056.ua* predominantly wrote about IDPs as 'refugees'; however, between 2015 and 2018, all options were used by both sites (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Migrants' labelling



Source: Author's compilation.

In 2014, journalists mentioned 'refugees' more often. If *atn.ua* exploited both definitions, *056.ua* named IDPs only as 'refugees' at first, so the people from Donetsk and Luhansk regions were perceived as foreigners (leaving some other country because of the conflict). Only after two months of the ATO beginning, on 10 June, journalists used the term '*pereselentsi*' ('migrants'). Additionally, the site created a tag '*beglyj*' (runaway) – an adjective which is often used in the expression 'a runaway criminal'. After 2014, the two sites exploit both options.

There is an interesting situation with phrases which name only the region where people lived before. Such phrases are predominantly neutral: 'families from the East of Ukraine' or 'people of Crimea' and can be considered as having a less-divisive effect. Therefore, journalists using these phrases do not set apart people from Donbas or Crimea as being special – they are simply people from a Ukrainian region, as every Ukrainian is. However, these phrases were not that popular and there was no increase in use of the phrase during the observation period. Thus, RQ2 is confirmed: journalists do not differentiate between the terms 'IDPs' and 'refugees' but use both, whereas neutral characteristics such as 'Ukrainians' or 'people from…' are rare.

Active/passive IDPs

To confirm general observations about the 'passiveness' of IDPs, the roles of internally displaced people (either active or passive) were counted. Both sites wrote about migrants as passive people, who were given help and assistance (see Figure 4). This approach did not change between 2014 and 2018.

Figure 4. Active or passive IDPs

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
atn.ua active	31	9	3	4	0
atn.ua passive	58	46	3	7	1
056.ua active	16	8	3	1	0
056.ua passive	70	44	10	3	2

Source: author's compilation.

Such situations occured because the sites preferred to cover news about events where aid was given to migrants (meetings with local authorities or international organisations or forums for IDPs). These texts were easy to produce because, as a rule, journalists used press releases and were not required to be at the scene of an event. Additionally, there were many publications in which the local authorities or politicians appeared (giving presents or making promises), with some of the texts having signs of '*jeansa*'. Thus, in times of high focus on the topic, with frequent texts about help being given from volunteers, governments or international institutions, the public may perceive migrants as having received sufficient care and attention. Thus, RQ3 is confirmed: IDPs are shown as passive, an observation which is true for both the beginning and the end of the observation period.

The news sources

IDPs were quoted quite often – however, predominantly during the 'hot' phase (see Table 2).

The types of news source

Officials, IDPs and local inhabitants/international sources were among the top three leading news sources. As a rule, officials dominated; however, for *Atn.ua* in 2015, IDP sources were even more popular than those of officials. With time, the focus on IDPs declined. *056.ua* did not mention them as sources in 2017–2018 nor did *Atn.ua* in 2018. For the latter, officials were more popular in 2017. Additionally, the sites represented two types of information policy with more local content (*056.ua*) and local, national and international content contamination (*atn.ua*). This is why, for *056.ua*, locals are popular – more popular than officials in 2015; however, for *Atn.ua* in 2015 international sources dominated. Thus, in the case of IDPs, attention to international sources leads to additional stress being laid on the 'help-giving' topic. For *056.ua*, the assistance of local people is mentioned frequently; politicians were popular as well, especially in 2014, when elections were held. As already mentioned, some politicians actively exploited the topic for self-promotion. For *Atn.ua*, politicians were not so interesting. It is also remarkable that volunteers were quoted less often than officials

on both sites. Officials' assistance was deemed more newsworthy. However, it was commonly acknowledged that volunteers' contributions were crucial for both the military and IDPs. For *Atn.ua*, the police were mentioned regularly; however, here, crimes *against* IDPs were reported (with just a few stories in which IDPs as criminals were mentioned). Publications from other mass media were not as popular, so the sites usually used their own stories and press releases from officials. Experts, the military and activists were represented mostly in 2014 – however, their participation was not that prominent.

Table 2. The types of news source

		2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**total**
056.ua	Officials	41	31	5	0	0	77
	IDP	25	25	6	0	0	56
	Locals	19	34	4	1	0	58
	International sources	5	10	3	1	0	19
	Volunteers	12	9	2	1	0	24
	Police	6	1	2	1	0	10
	Mass media	9	6	0	1	0	16
	Politicians	17	5	3	0	1	26
	Experts	7	5	2	0	0	14
	Activists	6	2	0	1	0	9
	Military	7	1	2	0	0	10
	Not identified	3	2	0	1	0	6
atn.ua	Officials	48	15	1	6	0	70
	IDP	47	19	1	2	0	69
	Locals	18	2	0	3	0	23
	International sources	18	31	3	5	1	58
	Volunteers	13	3	2	0	0	18
	Police	16	10	1	0	0	27
	Mass media	2	1	0	0	0	3
	Politicians	4	0	1	0	0	5
	Experts	5	2	2	0	0	9
	Activists	6	3	0	0	0	9
	Military	4	1	0	0	0	5
	Not identified	0	0	0	0	0	0

Thus, RQ4 is partly confirmed: officials were mentioned more often; however, IDPs were also quoted. For *Atn.ua* they were in second place, for *056.ua*, third place. However, it is important to add that, in 2017–2018, IDP voices were not heard at all. Thus, over time, IDPs themselves were quoted quite rarely. However, a strong focus on IDPs does not imply a balanced and ethical representation, so let us now analyse their characteristics.

Migrants' characteristics

With frame analysis, IDPs' characteristics were studied and the most typical identified. Basic violations of the topic's coverage were also discovered. As a rule, journalists do not see individual personalities, thus some speculation about IDPs is disseminated. Journalistic routine also influences the coverage.

Generalisation

The generalisation frame was used mainly in publications about officials' activities and was borrowed from press releases. Sometimes numbers and other data were included in the background.

The sites preferred to mention numbers in order to show the scale of both the 'problem' and of aid:

- '127 families received aid';
- 'local authorities helped more than 100,000 migrants'; and
- '384,434 families applied for financial aid'.

In a number of publications, phrases like 'all IDPs' or 'all IDPs' children' were found. The use of numbers and the pronoun 'all' was one of the ways to show IDPs in general *en masse*, receiving a lot of help and attention. Moreover, all IDPs' needs are covered – local authorities are effectively solving the problem.

It is important that the numbers were usually mentioned without context. For instance, it was not clear whether the families who applied for help made up the majority or the minority. What aid was given and how many tons of it were distributed (do all IDPs receive it?). So, the numbers may be impressive but, as a rule, texts with numbers used official statistics as a source. A generalisation frame also occurred – when journalists did not have the possibility, time or intention to dig deeper into a story. One more aspect – texts with a generalisation framing were mainly written from the officials' perspective. As a rule, local authorities commented about the aid; however, IDPs were not asked if the aid was indeed useful.

Victims

Journalists also wrote about migrants as 'people who do not have the basic necessities', 'people who suffer', 'women with abortion cases'; they also mentioned numbers of those without employment and with diseases. Of course, journalists more often reported on complicated cases. However, the general observation was that all IDPs are poor – all of them suffer. Sometimes journalists just speculated: 'The majority of IDPs are poor people. They don't have enough money or any jobs. They need bread, grain, vegetables, nappies, medicine, children's clothes'.

In all the cases where journalists described IDPs as 'victims', concrete stories were rarely included. Thus, initially, the mass media created a stereotype of poor and desperate IDPs which they were later not able to backtrack on. Emotional speculation about sufferings was more important than personal stories. Sometimes journalists made connections between cases ('abortion', 'suicide') and IDP status. Individual stories about successful resettlement were rare. Thinking about journalistic routines, we can explain it thus: it is easier to write a story in a dormitory or a centre for IDPs – however, for a feature about a successful individual, one needs to look for contacts to dig deeper into the context, to set up an interview etc. Additionally, it was not that easy to find a successful example at the beginning of the war. However, afterwards there were many stories of IDPs who had launched their own business or set up art projects, volunteer organisations etc. The mass media, however, sometimes just ignored such facts because they did not match the paradigm of 'a desperate victim, looking for help from a local community'. In some cases, wealthy IDPs even irritated journalists: '[wealthy IDPs] drive expensive cars, violate traffic rules and demonstrate the boorish behaviour usual for Donetsk'.

Thus, the 'victim' frame was popular and did not allow journalists to show a complete and adequate portrait of IDPs.

Threat metaphors and danger

Typical metaphors about IDPs – such as ‘flood’, ‘wave’ or ‘occupation’ were mentioned mainly during the ‘hot’ phase. Journalists created a feeling of growing tension: there are too many IDPs, our city/region is not ready. The mass media used exaggerations: ‘half of the country may resettle and a remaining half should be ready to deal with this’. The possibility of a ‘social explosion’ was also mentioned. Additionally, generalisations were extremely influential: the mass media constantly published official statistics with just the numbers of IDPs entering a region.

Sites sometimes stressed the migrants’ pro-Russian position and, as a result, the need to check the people from Donbas. However, cases of separatism were observed in both Kharkiv and Dnipro. Meanwhile, journalists stressed that IDPs should be checked, because they may be ‘stained with separatism’. There was also some speculation about the reasons for IDPs’ resettlement: ‘they move from their towns not because of pro-Russian supporters and terrorists but just because of the bombing’. However, bombing is a reason for internal migration. *056.ua* differentiated between ‘adequate and inadequate migrants’: on 18 March 2015, journalists of the site wrote: ‘All affected people had moved from Donbas already’. There were also reports about ‘fake’ IDPs. So, as well as threat metaphors and speculations about ‘predominantly pro-Russian’ IDPs, journalists additionally differentiated between locals and people from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. However, mentions of crime were rare (numbers of ‘illegal’ migrants were published; journalists reported some cases of crimes committed against migrants). Thus, despite the use of police reports to cover the topic, local Ukrainian journalists did not perceive migrants as criminals.

Help-giving

As previously mentioned, the main sources of the migrant topic were officials, the migrants themselves and locals or international sources. Thus, for local media the problem of resettlement was an opportunity to show a positive image of local authorities, international institutions and local inhabitants. Of course, journalists published only a few reports about IDPs helping other IDPs. Additionally, the popularity of volunteer movements in post-Maidan Ukraine should be taken into consideration. The sites used such expressions as ‘people of Dnipropetrovsk who shared what they can’, ‘compassionate students, who help destitute people, sleep three hours a day’, ‘volunteers do their best’. Numerous publications of this type showed signs of ‘*jeansa*’. For instance, a Ukrainian oligarch, the former head of Dnipropetrovsk regional administration – Igor Kolomoisky – and his deputy, Igor Filatov, were mentioned and journalists stressed the ‘effectiveness’ of their actions, quoting their speculation about IDPs. Former ‘Party of Regions’ members Sergiy Tigipko, Rinat Akhmetov and Yuri Vilkul made claims about their own help for IDPs.

Let us now analyse some typical cases of ‘*jeansa*’ about IDPs. There were several types: texts about politicians or local authorities who were represented as ‘good Samaritans’ and texts with statements about IDPs’ situation. In the first type of text, reporters spoke of politicians and oligarchs who had solved all the needs of the IDPs; many numbers were included and reporters provided their readers with lists of goods, medicine and equipment which were presented as ‘gifts’. Additionally, authors stressed the long-term assistance offered. Thus, a manipulative image occurred: every IDP’s problems will be solved. For instance, in the text ‘Tigipko’s Fund bought medicine and equipment for military hospitals’, an author reports that the hospitals received ‘medicine of high efficacity’ and modern equipment ‘which had no analogues before’. There were also 15 photos of the hospital, happy medical workers, the equipment and the medicine. Mention was also made of the fact that the Fund constantly monitors all the needs of the hospitals – the people who suffered

in the zone of ATO and 'refugees' in particular. There were no comments by medical workers, patients. Thus, it is impossible to understand whether this assistance is effective and whether IDPs have any other needs etc.

The next text of this type is about Akhmetov's humanitarian trip: 'The first load of goods from Akhmetov's humanitarian trip is delivered to Mariupol for the refugees'. One author reports that 570 volunteers unloaded the trucks and mentions the goods in detail: tea, biscuits, sugar, juices etc.; in total 200 tons of aid and 200,000 individual packages. There is a quote by Mariupol's Mayor, who thanked Akhmetov. Finally, in the background of the text there is information about the next trip: 40 more trucks will be sent.

As with the second type of text, there were statements by officials claiming that everything is under control, the local authorities are excellent at their job ('Dnipropetrovsk is a main fortified area of Ukraine – we should thank Kolomoysky' – Lutsenko'). Opponents of the government were also presented in another group of texts which were published mainly before the elections. These created a different picture: the government did not manage the situation at all – 'refugees are second-class people', the government does not defend its own people but leaves them all alone etc. (Halyna Bulavka: 'Refugees and inhabitants of Eastern regions must not be second-class people for the government'). Thus, readers just received contradictable pieces of information, which might lead to the decline of trust in all sides and of the mass media as well.

Thus, in the 'victim' frame, journalists portrayed the desperateness of the migrants but, in the 'help-giving' one, they stressed the nobleness of local people, volunteers, politicians and local authorities. As a result, Ukrainian internal migrants became an effective background for positive images of cities, their communities, politicians and officials although the IDPs themselves were not shown to be part of them.

Thus, the last RQ5 is confirmed. Basic violations in the coverage of the topic of IDPs may be found in the Ukrainian local mass media. However, cases of hate speech and approaches to show IDPs as 'potential criminals' were not salient. Some frames were more popular than others. Journalists used the generalisation frame more often (156 mentions – for both sites). 'Victim' (70) and 'help-giving' (57) frames occurred constantly too. Frames connected with inconvenience or even danger were observed less frequently (37), while the 'criminal' frame was not popular (7).

Discussion and conclusion

According to previous discoveries in the field of Ukrainian local journalism, research numbers are quite comparable with the manner of covering other topics by the Ukrainian local media. Ukrainian news sites predominantly prefer to rely only on a single source as journalists usually do not have enough time to check out information and therefore use press releases and social networks posts; the government, the local authorities, politicians and the police are the main commentators in Ukrainian local media (Yeremenko 2016). Additionally, analytics are also not very popular among local journalists – before 24 February 2022, approximately 1 per cent of local press content was about IDPs (see POID reports). However, perceptions of IDPs in the mass media of the regions which are close to Donetsk and Luhansk and hosted the largest number of migrants, have some specifics.

Images of dangerous IDPs in the mass media are not frequent and some compassion can be seen. In general, the context of texts is positive. Additionally, the relatively high number of IDP news sources is also a positive tendency. As a rule, scholars who studied coverage of internal migration in the media, did not observe this (Apuke and Tunca 2019; Hussain 2016). In this particular case, IDPs were quite often used as news sources by Ukrainian local mass media – they were in the top three most popular sources (along with officials, locals and international sources). However, this observation is true only for 2014–2015 (the 'hot' phase). During this period, journalists used a variety of sources. Later, the coverage became more episodic and publications about the topic typically had only one source. Therefore, we may conclude that the local press may be an important

forum for IDPs, as journalists are interested in their stories. As the results of my content analysis have also shown, the Ukrainian local press published stories about IDPs predominantly during the 'hot' phase of the conflict; later, journalists' attention decreased significantly (so here some correlation between the number of texts about IDPs and IDPs' usage as news sources can be seen: the more texts, the more IDP sources).

The Ukrainian media did not work out a clear definition of IDPs: both 'refugee' and 'IDP' terms were used between 2014–2018. It is important to stress, however, that the term 'refugees' was used at the beginning of the Russian aggression on Donbas, which might anchor the attitude towards IDPs as some kind of foreigners. IDPs were, in fact, usually described as passive.

In this context, basic violations of the coverage of IDPs occurred. It was possible to see this with the help of frame analysis. Local journalists mostly used generalisations. IDPs were described as victims. IDPs' poverty and health problems became salient and newsworthy while their success stories were rarely seen. Aditionally, help for migrants was one of the prominent issues. Journalists were keen to show their own city, local authorities and local people in a positive context. As a result, people who received help were generalised, with the weakest and the poorest of them in the foreground, whereas people who gave help were shown as altruistic. The 'threat' frame was rarely used; however, some aggressive and manipulative phrases were disseminated. A 'criminal' frame was also not popular.

Thus, both the number of publications and the use of IDPs as news sources did not prevent local journalists from publishing stereotyped, biased coverage of internal migration. The actions of the 'providers' to help IDPs are the priority, whereas the perspective of the 'receivers' is ignored in many cases. It is remarkable that, in the media, official structures' failure to solve IDPs problems, especially at the beginning of the Russian aggression, was not mentioned at all. On the contrary, the journalists' reliance on the officials as news sources caused another image to form: that of local authorities doing their best to help IDPs.

Therefore, the local mass-media perspective should be taken into account in such studies. It is quite understandable that the national mass media may miss some important details and try to show a general picture, where IDPs' narratives seem not to be important. Thus, regional closeness to the military conflict matters. However, these observations need further investigation: it is important to compare the mass media of different Ukrainian regions as well as the local and the national mass media representations. Of course, for further discoveries, new media outlets (social networks in particular) should also be studied. For instance, Kenyan researchers compared blogs and the mainstream media and concluded that the blogs were more attentive to IDPs (Apuke and Tunca 2019). In Ukraine, volunteers actively used social networks to mobilise support from local communities and the dissemination of some resonant stories might additionally influence the representation of Ukrainian IDPs.

It is also important to come up with some recommendations for both mass-media coverage and the press offices of local authorities. IDPs' socialisation is important for local communities, therefore all sides should contribute. According to the results of the framing analysis, local authorities and politicians cared about their positive image and their press offices constructed messages with generalisation, victim and help-giving frames. However, such an approach does not mean that a complete picture can be shown which would enable the reader to understand the real needs of migrants and the strong and weak sides of policy towards IDPs. As for the mass media, it is important to work out some solutions with news sources: at first, journalists were able to find IDPs and represent their side of a story; however, later, other sources prevailed. Therefore, a vocabulary and some guidelines for the local mass media are important too – to prevent the spread of stereotypes and prejudices (see Appendix for the examples of violations of mass-media quotes). Additionally, a more 'active' angle should be used, as well as clear reference to IDPs 'as IDPs', not as refugees.

One of the most significant issues for the mass media is speculation about the pro-Russian sympathies of IDPs. As a rule, these speculations were not based on facts or statistics. Sometimes politicians' or officials'

comments about their sympathies were disseminated. In times of war, stereotypes about IDPs may be used as an instrument of manipulation. As a result, a divided society, where the fears and prejudices about different groups exist, may be a suitable target. This analysis did not mention special information campaigns or propaganda operations in the local mass media – just some rare cases. However, these cases may also be harmful. Such cases are included in the Appendix as well.

This study adds to the scholarship on the representation of IDPs in the mass media, with a focus on local journalism. The local media observed IDPs more closely, with journalists perceiving them as 'internal others' (Lueck *et al.* 2015) or 'good others' (Don and Lee 2014). Ukrainian journalists stressed the migrants' 'vulnerability', presenting them as 'worthy of care' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2016). However, compliance with professional standards and special steps taken by the mass media are needed in order to see IDPs as equal members of local communities. '*Jeansa*', subjectivity, a lack of balance, accuracy and completeness may all be seen in texts about IDPs. Additionally, journalistic division between 'noble' locals and 'desperate' migrants may cause migrants' ignorance of local news sites. Thus, IDPs may not be engaging with local politics. As a result, a space for gossip, manipulation and disinformation may be formed which could be a problem in future post-war attempts to re-build and unite the country.

Notes

1. This research was conducted before the full-scale Russian invasion which has started on 24 February 2022. Along with the death of thousands of civilians, the destruction of civil infrastructures and of whole cities and towns, with the ensuing violence and atrocities, the invasion also caused internal migration. According to the International Organization for Migration, over 8,000,000 people fled the war (IOM 2023). The consequences of this migration, governments' and international organisations' responses and the mass media and social networks' reactions will be studied in the future. However, this paper highlights IDP representation between February 2014 – when Russian aggression began in Crimea and, later, in Donbas – and February 2022 – when Ukrainians all over the country, in many cities and towns, woke up to Russian missiles and bombs. By the end of the day, many had collected their belongings and fled from their homes.
2. According to Ukrainian legislation, the Council coordinates and controls executive authorities' actions in the fields of national security and defense – the Ukrainian President is the head of the Council.

Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Appendix

Quotes from the mass media – examples of the frames

GENERALISATION

In the Dnepropetrovsk region, a special centre was opened; it includes 28 public organisations (from environmentalists to feminists). And everyone is occupied with something – with PR, refugees, volunteer work – *IDPs mentioned in a list of items.*

'I've probably never had in my life so much kindness and warmth', one migrant said about Dnepropetrovsk residents. A woman made a difficult journey from the town of Torez, destroyed by separatists – *the IDP woman did not have a name.*

We can resettle refugees, dress them and arrange for overnight stays, donate blood and save them from bombing – *IDPs mentioned as some object which should be dressed etc.*

In Russia, refugees from Donbass are called 'demographic resources' and estimated at 400,000 people – *no individual cases (were called or were estimated).*

The press service also noted that IDP women gave birth to 2,598 children – *no individual cases, the number without any context*.

There are 810,000 IDPs from Donbass registered in Ukraine – Ministry of Social Policy – *the number without context.*

VICTIM

How pregnant refugees are saved in Dnepropetrovsk and dissuaded from abortions – *a stereotype of IDPs being ready for the abortion, IDPs are represented by 'pregnant women'.*

Here, unborn babies, pregnant women and single mothers are literally saved from death – *IDPs being on the edge of death, IDPs are represented by 'babies, women, single mothers'.*

The couple who jumped onto the rails in the Kiev subway turned out to be refugees from Donbass – *the detail about the 'refugee status' isn't important here; a reader may connect the fact of suicide with the status, however, this correlation may be false.*

Entrance is for free food. Kharkiv hosts festival to help IDPs from Crimea and Donbass – *IDPs can't afford the basic needs, like food.*

HELP GIVING

Here, in Dnepropetrovsk, children [IDPs] were immediately given toys – *'immediately given'.*

Our students are not indifferent to someone else's grief; they sleep only three hours a day – *altruism of 'the providers'.*

We help displaced people from Slavyansk in any way we can – *the local inhabitants do their best to help.*

The Centre does everything possible to make visitors from Donbass feel as comfortable as possible in Dnepropetrovsk – *again 'the providers' do their best.*

The EU countries will provide Ukraine with unprecedented humanitarian aid for IDPs – *'unprecedented' aid for IDPS.*

The authorities will do everything possible to make these houses [for IDPs] comfortable – *'will do everything possible'.*

Turkey provided 200 tons of humanitarian aid to IDPs from Donbass – *'tons' of aid.*

Less than a month has passed since the last shipment of humanitarian aid from Kharkiv to Donbass. Then our fellows-Ukrainians collected 326 tons of food, medicines; they didn't even forget to give Christmas trees to the children. Today, the total cargo has increased by four tons – as a part of the 'humanitarian aid' – about 1,000 food packages. 24 trucks will go to the territories liberated from militants. 17 cars leave Kharkiv, 7 more departed from Pavlograd – *'tons' of aid, food, 1,000 packages, more help will come.*

DANGER, BURDEN

Today, KamAZ vehicles of the dead are passing through the hands of these people [the local authorities]. The wounded pass through them. The main wave of refugees passed through them – *the wave.*

The flow of people does not stop even now – *the flow.*

If the situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine does not stabilise in the near future, a massive influx of refugees is expected from there – *IDPs destabilise the situation, 'a massive influx'.*

Of course, we would not want to turn into a transit zone, where tens of thousands of refugees will go, but we are preparing – *'zone' because of IDPs.*

First of all, there are questions for people who leave Snizhne, Slavyansk and Kramatorsk. They are very aggressive, they think that everyone here owes them; they do not want to work. Although people from Donetsk are more or less adequate – '*aggressive*', '*more or less adequate' IDPs.*

The migrants don't want to get any job. Especially those, who had a prestigious job before – *IDPs don't want to work.*

Today Mariupol is not ready to accept these people [IDPs]. The city is on the verge of a social explosion – *the explosion because of IDPs.*

Waves of Donetsk emigration (or occupation?) have been rolling over the city for more than a decade – *the waves, 'occupation'.*

PRO-RUSSIAN IDPs

At checkpoints, cars are regularly detained. Some strange 'refugees' with bruises on their right shoulder and traces of gun soot on their fingers drive from east to west of Ukraine – *IDPs described as militants, who were in combat against Ukrainian military.*

The regional administration will check all 'refugees' of military age who do not want to be registered temporarily and are also engaged in parasitism – *'fake' refugees, don't want to defend their country and join the military, parasites.*

Nina [an IDP] had to quit her work because of an 'anonymous message' with a complaint about her political views – *not normal political views for an IDP.*

According to the deputy head of the Dnepropetrovsk Regional State Administration, there are also many people among the IDPs who support the separatists – *it's not clear why the deputy head is so sure about separatism.*

Alexander led IDPs to the dacha in the summer. 'They lived practically for free, then I was fine with it, besides, they were acquaintances – he recalls. – They seemed like normal people, then they found an apartment, moved out. They didn't even say goodbye. After their departure we came to the dacha with my wife.

Everything mostly was fine, clean, only on the table was a note that killed us: ‘We hate you anyway’ – *IDPs who hate residents of Kyiv, because of political views.*

Adequate people from Donbas have already left – *people who stay there are inadequate, separatists.*

CRIME

There are about 50,000 illegal immigrants in the region – *the number without context, it isn’t clear why these people don’t want to register, are there any obstacles etc.?*

A family of refugees from Donbas was killed in Russia – *a false correlation: the killing was because of the refugee status.*

IDPs cannot be subjected to forced fingerprinting and, most importantly, they do not want to work – *All IDPs should be fingerprinted.*

Another mechanism of falsification will be a large number of displaced persons, whom we call refugees – *with the help of IDPs, the election will be falsified.*

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The Situation of Forced Migrants from Ukraine in Europe after Russian Military Aggression and the Problems of Ukraine's Migration Policy in These New Conditions

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This article assesses the situation of forced migrants from Ukraine in European countries. I use data from the Statistical Bureaux and sociological institutions of Ukraine and recipient countries and from international organisations. Semi-structured interviews with experts were conducted in order to expand the information base of the research and obtain more substantiated analytical results and the trends of forced migration from Ukraine since 24 February 2022 were investigated. An attempt was made to explain the difference between the data from various sources regarding the migration of Ukrainians caused by the Russian war against Ukraine. The hierarchy of problems of forced migrants from Ukraine is determined on the base of in-depth interviews of experts. An attempt was made to estimate the impact of the forced migration of Ukrainians on local markets of goods and services. The recommendations for minimising the irreversible migration losses of the population of Ukraine are developed.

Keywords: Ukraine, forced migrants from Ukraine, Russian war against Ukraine, forced migrants from Ukraine in Europe, migration policy

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Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 led to unprecedented population movement – the most massive flow in Europe after the Second World War. Residents of the regions of Ukraine adjacent to the front zone and the occupied territories began to leave, heading not only for relatively safe Ukrainian regions but also for foreign countries.

Even before the full-scale invasion, the migration situation in Ukraine could hardly be called favourable. Since the 1990s, the country has been one of the largest suppliers of labour force in Europe. According to the data from the third national survey on labour migration, which was conducted by the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine between January and June 2017, the number of Ukranian citizens aged 15–70 who, from the beginning of 2015 to the middle of 2017, were working or looking for a job abroad, amounted to 1.3 million persons or 4.5 per cent of the age-matched population (SSSU 2017). Compared to the data from the second nationwide survey on relevant issues conducted in 2012 (ILO 2013), the level of participation of the population of Ukraine aged 15–70 in external labour migration increased by a third. At the same time, the survey could not cover the members of households which had gone abroad in their entirety and had been living there for many years, as well as persons who went to work abroad before 2015 and have not since returned to Ukraine. In other words, the real scale of Ukrainian labour migration is greater and, on the eve of the Covid-19 pandemic, was estimated at between 2.5 and 3.0 million people (Pyrozhkov, Libanova, Novikova, Skrypnyuk, Ustymenko, Khamitov and Shulga 2018). The main recipient countries of the Ukrainian workforce, according to the 2017 survey, were Poland (38.9 per cent), the Russian Federation (26.3 per cent), Italy (11.3 per cent) and the Czech Republic (9.4 per cent) (SSSU 2017). Since 2014, the departure of qualified specialists has also increased (Drbohlav and Jaroszewicz 2016). As a result, Ukrainian employers began to experience difficulties in recruiting qualified personnel due to labour migration abroad.

In the conditions of war, not only the scale but also the very nature of migration changes, the composition of migrants undergoes transformations and, therefore, the study of new migrations from Ukraine to European countries becomes of paramount importance. The purpose of this article is to assess the situation of forced migrants from Ukraine, determine their problems and develop recommendations for minimising irreversible migration losses for the population of Ukraine. The issue of determining the consequences of the departure of forced external migrants for the country, as well as a detailed assessment of the probable level of their return to Ukraine and its factors, is beyond the scope of this article and is expected to be the subject of a separate publication.

Theoretical background

This study focuses on assessing the changes and nature of Ukrainian migration caused by military aggression and takes into account that any crisis leads to the transformation of migration processes. Crises are considered by the author as an aggravation of contradictions (political, economic and social). The Russian war against Ukraine became the most significant, although not the first, crisis in Ukraine after the declaration of independence. Crises lead to disruption of the stable development of the economy. In the history of Ukraine after the collapse of the USSR – and until 2022 – Ukrainian scientists Opanasiuk, Martynets and Matvieieva (2021) single out the following crises, which were accompanied by declines in the country's GDP:

1. The crisis of 1998–1999. This crisis arose as an echo of the global crisis.
2. The crisis of 2009, which initially affected the industrially developed countries of Europe and Asia and later began in the developing countries. Ukraine became one of the countries the most affected by this crisis.

3. The economic and political crisis of 2013–2015. The crisis began in 2013 amid political protests and intensified in 2014 in connection with the beginning of the 'anti-terrorist operation'[1] in the East of Ukraine.
4. The Covid-19 pandemic, which caused a crisis in many countries in 2020. The pandemic led to the introduction of severe restrictive measures that affected not only social development but also the economic development of countries around the world.

These crises were each of a different nature but the economic, political and military problems caused by them always stimulated the transformation of the migratory activity of the population in one way or another. The crisis of 1998–1999 contributed to the formation of flows of external labour migration (Vollmer and Malynovska 2016). Later, Ukraine became one of the countries the most affected by the crisis of 2009, which led to a reduction in the volume of temporary labour migration but contributed to its transition into a permanent form (Pyrozhkov *et al.* 2018). The consequences of the economic and political crisis of 2013–2015, accompanied by military intervention, were an increase in the intensity of external migration – in particular an increase in the share of young people and highly qualified persons among migrants (Drbohlav and Jaroszewicz 2016). The Covid-19 pandemic caused a crisis in many countries in 2020 and led, in particular, to the restriction of international population movements (Libanova and Pozniak 2020).

Migration transformations in Ukraine, caused by the 2022 crisis, are studied both in Ukraine and in the world. Ukrainian researchers reviewed the decisions by European government bodies which establish the mechanisms for receiving refugees, estimated the implementation of temporary protection directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001), analysed the attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees abroad (Filipchuk, Lomonosova, Syrbu and Kabanets 2022) and attempted to assess the scale of forced migration of the population of Ukraine and to identify the consequences of large-scale migratory movements (Libanova, Pozniak and Tsymbal 2022). In-depth studies of Ukrainian forced migrants in recipient countries – including the socio-demographic structure of migrants, their situation and the consequences for the receiving countries – were carried out, in particular, by scientists from Poland (Bukowski and Duszczyk 2022; Chmielewska-Kalińska, Dudek and Strzelecki 2022) and the Czech Republic (Klimešová, Šatava and Ondruška 2022). At the same time, the situation with forced migration from Ukraine was changing dynamically, which determines the relevance of further research in this area.

The escape from the war in Ukraine is qualitatively different from the previous waves of forced migration to Europe – in particular in terms of gender and age characteristics and especially in terms of intentions regarding labour activity. Ukrainians who arrive in the EU and its neighbouring countries because of full-scale Russian aggression rarely try to get refugee status – instead they more often apply for temporary protection which, in particular, gives the right to employment. At the same time, there are problems with using the term 'refugees' to denote all forced migrants from Ukraine, even by international organisations and portals (Statista 2022; UNHCR 2022b).

In this paper the term 'forced migrants from Ukraine' ('forced external migrants') is used as a general term for all persons who were forced to move from Ukraine to foreign countries regardless of the status obtained in the recipient country. The article examines, in particular, the contingent of migrants who left Ukraine after the Russian invasion (both Ukrainian citizens and foreigners who lived in Ukraine before 24 February 2022) and had a permit for permanent or temporary residence or the status of a refugee or a person entitled to additional protection in European countries (i.e., EU countries, EFTA countries, Great Britain, Moldova, Western Balkan countries, Turkey and countries of the southern Caucasus[2]).

Method of data collection

This study uses data from the authorities and sociological institutions of Ukraine and recipient countries, as well as international organisations. The daily data on the number of border crossings (from and to Ukraine) from the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGSU) are used to estimate the scale of forced migration from Ukraine. A comparative analysis of these data was carried out with the official data from the EU countries, published on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Operational Data Portal and Portal Statista for the period from the end of February to mid-October 2022. In addition, data from both portals were used to find out the distribution of forced migrants from Ukraine by country of destination.

To estimate the number and structure of Ukrainians who have received PESEL[3] in Poland since the beginning of the full-scale war, Poland's data portal information was analysed. Investigation of the structure of forced migrants from Ukraine in Europe, their situation in European countries and the problems they face is based on data from the special surveys of forced migrants from Ukraine conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and sociological institutions of Ukraine, Poland and the Czech Republic. Statistical and sociological data were collected from open sources.

All analysed data refer to the period after the beginning of the Russian invasion except for the data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (SSSU) about Ukrainian labour migration until 2022, which are considered in the context of a general review.

When using data from sociological surveys, we should take into account that, during the condition of the war, ensuring representative sample surveys is extremely complicated. Sociological institutions of Ukraine usually conduct telephone interviews. However, the holders of Ukrainian telephone numbers who are abroad include not only those who left due to the war but also external labour migrants who were working abroad before the active phase of the war. Besides, many Ukrainian phones were lost or taken by the Russian occupiers. Even in recipient countries, it is difficult to ensure the representativeness of the sample, since the various categories of forced migrants may show different degrees of readiness to participate in surveys.

To expand the information base of the research and obtain additional and more substantiated analytical results, in-depth semi-structured interviews with experts were conducted. A comparative analysis of the results of these expert interviews, statistical sources and sociological surveys was then carried out. This paper was prepared in Autumn 2022.

In total, 23 interviews with experts were conducted between 13 July and 7 September 2022 (see Annex 1). The target groups of experts (separate lists of questions were developed for each group) are:

1. Ukrainian forced external migrants with a scientific degree;
2. scientists and representatives of authorities of the recipient countries;
3. representatives of local self-government bodies and scientists of the recipient regions of Ukraine; and
4. IDPs who have a scientific degree.

Of all the experts interviewed, 15 people belong to the first and second categories. The interviews with the eight experts of the third and fourth groups were mainly related to intra-state forced migration – however, a number of questions refer to external migration.

People who are knowledgeable about the researched issues were selected as experts. When constructing a pool of experts, the following tasks were set:

1. Each of the two main recipient countries (Poland and Germany) must be represented by at least two persons, including at least one resident of this country and at least one forced migrant from Ukraine.
2. The Czech Republic should be represented as the third among the EU countries in terms of the number of forced migrants from Ukraine and Moldova as the only country of the former USSR – except for the aggressor countries – which borders Ukraine.

3. Other represented countries should include at least one Baltic country, one more Central and Eastern European country and one more country from the so-called ‘old’ EU members.
4. Represented recipient regions should include at least two Western and two Central oblasts of Ukraine.

The selection of experts was based on the author’s personal contacts. In addition, the recommendations of the interviewees regarding additional nominations of experts were taken into account. Unfortunately, not all invited persons responded to the invitation. However, it was possible to complete all the tasks related to the construction of the group of experts.

The interviewed experts represent eight foreign countries (Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Finland, Estonia, Hungary, France and Moldova) and five regions of Ukraine (Lviv, Zakarpattia, Ternopil, Vinnytsia and Kyiv oblasts). Twenty scientists and three representatives of authorities were interviewed. Interviews were conducted mostly online (via Zoom).

The most interviewed scientists are migration research specialists; the others are specialists in related sciences (demographic, social and political). All representatives of authorities hold management positions and are faced with the problems of forced migrants. The experts participated in the survey voluntarily, with prior consent and on the condition of anonymity.

In addition, a separate version of the questionnaire was developed for short interviews with the leaders of immigrant communities in Ukraine (four questions). Three such interviews (conversations) were conducted by phone with the leaders of the African, Vietnamese and Syrian communities in Ukraine to learn about changes in the situation in their communities after 24 February 2022.

Semi-structured interviews with experts is a qualitative research method and the author’s use of their results to show quantitative characteristics does not claim to be fully representative.

Scale of forced migration from Ukraine

According to the UNHCR (2022b), as of 4 October 2022, there were 4.2 million forced migrants from Ukraine in European countries,[4] of whom 34 per cent found refuge in Poland, 17 per cent settled in Germany and 11 per cent in the Czech Republic. At the same time, as of mid-September 2022, the Czech Republic and Estonia shared the first and second places in the EU in terms of the relative indicator of the number of forced migrants from Ukraine per 1,000 inhabitants in country, surpassing Poland (which ranks third according to the corresponding indicator) by 14 per cent and Germany by 3.4 times (Statista 2022). According to interviews with experts, the final place of evacuation was chosen mostly randomly (this was reported, in particular, by the interviewed forced migrants from Ukraine), the more often taking into account the presence of relatives and acquaintances, the distance and the cost of living, as well as on the basis of previous experience of staying in the corresponding country or the desire to visit it. The choice of Moldova by some migrants was often due to the fact that it is a country of the same type as Ukraine – that is, from the former republic of the USSR – and which, like Ukraine, chose the European vector of development, has a similar language situation and has a population of similar mentality. The forced migrants themselves noted that the main reasons that prompted Ukrainians to choose a particular country were the presence of friends and relatives in this country (55 per cent were guided by this), the proximity to the border with Ukraine (32 per cent) and job opportunities and social benefits (15 and 14 per cent respectively). According to this survey of forced migrants, the main incentive for orientation towards Poland was proximity (territorial, cultural, language), while Germany was chosen due to better social conditions for refugees and the Czech Republic due to wider employment opportunities (4Service Group 2022b).

At the same time, the UNHCR (2022b) claimed that 7.6 million ‘refugees from Ukraine are recorded across Europe’ in early October 2022. This number includes people who have entered European countries and is

based on information from border-guard services. However, both Ukrainian and foreign border-guard services record not the number of persons who crossed the border but the number of border crossings.

According to data from the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGSU 2022a), over 9.6 million 'persons left Ukraine', according to the original terminology, in the period 24 February–9 October. In fact, the data relate to border crossings *not* the number of persons. They refer to the borders with EU countries and Moldova – since the checkpoints on the borders with the Russian Federation, Belarus and the Transnistrian section of the border with Moldova have been closed from the beginning of the war – and also include foreigners who were actively leaving Ukraine during the first weeks of the war (for example, of 110,000 persons who crossed the borders of Ukraine with Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary on 27 February 2022, foreigners accounted for approximately 18 per cent, although their share in the total population of Ukraine barely exceeded 1 per cent). Short interviews with the leaders of migrant communities showed that 90–95 per cent of representatives of the African, Vietnamese and Syrian diasporas left Ukraine. Unfortunately, when trying to reach most of the leaders and representatives of other communities by phone, the answering machines reported that the account for each number had not been replenished for several months, which is collateral evidence that the owners had left Ukraine. Those immigrants who have remained in Ukraine mostly have Ukrainian citizenship, families and businesses.

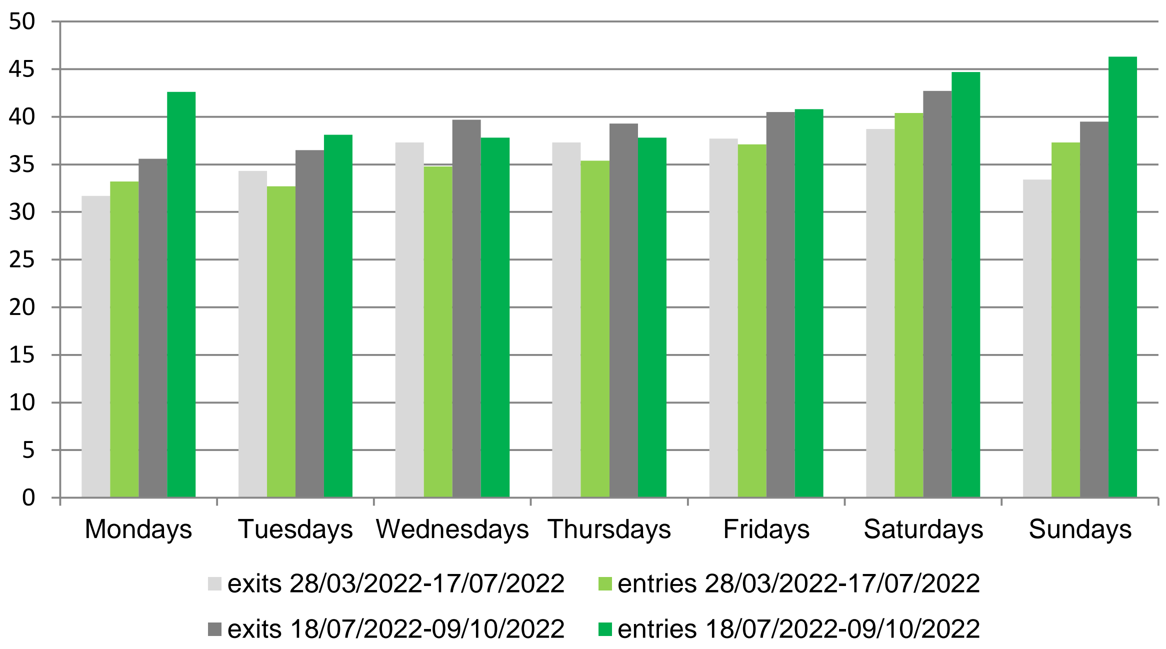
The reverse flow is also large-scale: in total, from the beginning of the war until mid-October 2022, according to the SBGSU (2022a), more than 7.9 million border crossings to Ukraine have been registered. Initially, in the first two weeks, men were actively returning from abroad, their specific weight reaching 80 per cent among the 200,000 persons who entered Ukraine. They were mostly labour migrants returning with the aim of participating in the defence of their country and helping their families in these troubled times, etc. (SBGSU 2022b). According to the Polish scientists interviewed, many of them had quit their jobs. As a result of the war, there was a shortage of workers in Poland in certain industries (for example, logistics, transport, construction) due to the return of some Ukrainian men who worked in Poland before the war and were involved in the defence of the country (Bukowski and Duszczyk 2022).

Based on the data of the Ukrainian border guards, information about the departure of millions of people and the return of the vast majority of forced migrants to Ukraine is spreading widely. In fact, already at the turn of March–April 2022, the bulk of border crossings in both directions began to take on various forms of pendulum migration (as a result, many people entered the statistics on border crossings several times). On the basis of various sources of information – in particular, the analysis of the daily dynamics of the number of crossings of the state border – it is possible to define the following types of pendulum migration in the border regions of Ukraine:

1. The temporary return of external labour migrants for the celebration of Easter (which, in 2022, fell on 17 and 24 April) with subsequent re-departure. On Friday–Saturday, on the eve of Catholic Easter according to the SBGSU daily data, 74,000 persons entered Ukraine – or 37,000 on average per day; on the eve of Orthodox Easter, this number was 73,000 persons or 36,500 per day while, during the period from Monday 18 to Thursday 21 April, an average of 32,000 persons entered the state per day.
2. The arrival of Ukrainian women/children to meet their husbands/parents (in April this flow partially overlapped with the flow of arrivals to celebrate Easter). This explains the significantly higher number of entries to Ukraine on Saturdays in the period from 28 March to 17 July 2022 – on average, 38,700 persons; on Fridays, 37,700 persons arrived while, on other days of the week, 31,700–37,300 persons). The arrival of women in Ukraine on a Saturday is the optimal solution; in this case their husbands can come to the border regions, spend the weekend with them and return to the workplace by Monday morning. On the other hand, the peak values of exits during this period were not so strongly tied to the

days of the week, as the duration of the short-term stay of women/children in Ukraine varied from less than one to several days (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of border crossings for exit from and entry to Ukraine by day of the week, on average per day in the periods 28 March to 17 July 2022 and 18 July to 09 October 2022, in thousands of persons



Source: calculated from data by SBGSU (2022a)

3. The process of pendulum migration for the purpose of withdrawing cash abroad using Ukrainian bank cards – so-called 'card tourism' – which is quite profitable given the exchange rate difference when withdrawing cash in Ukraine and abroad (Sundries 2022). This included, where possible, further resales of foreign currency on the 'black market'. Card tourism was active until October 2022, when the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) introduced limits on cash withdrawals abroad, which helped to stop this process (NBU 2022).
4. The so-called 'automobile pendulum migration' related to the import of used cars for personal use and for sale without paying excise duty from 5 April. During the validity of the permit (April–June 2022), on average 1.2–1.3 times more cars crossed the state border of Ukraine per day in both directions than before and after the expiration of the permit (unfortunately, the SBGSU does not provide information separately on the number of exits and entries of automobiles). According to media reports, Ukrainian women went abroad *en masse* to purchase cars because their husbands could not leave Ukraine during the war (Shevchuk 2022).
5. Light cross-border traffic: border crossing by the residents of the territory located within 30 km of the common border with Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary, for various social, cultural, family and economic reasons not related to paid work. This includes the delivery of products in small batches (i.e, within the limits that are not subject to customs duties); in the longer term, the delivery of construction materials, which was common before the war, continues. From the middle of July, the peak of arrivals shifted from Saturday to Sunday and, on Saturdays, noticeable peaks of departures began to be observed (Figure 1). This obviously indicates that the temporary return of women who

received protection in the EU countries began to give way numerically to the process of small cross-border traffic. For such participants, it is just convenient to return on Sunday (i.e. by the beginning of the working week), leaving again on Friday evening, Saturday or Sunday morning.

6. The movement of volunteers associated with periodical trips abroad and back.

According to the SBGSU, the total number of forced external migrants who left in the direction of EU countries and Moldova during the period of dominance of forced departure, up to the end of March (i.e., before the formation of the system of the above-mentioned pendulum flows), was 2.37 million persons, of whom about 410,000 are already returnees to Ukraine (cumulative difference between arrivals and departures for the period 10 May–9 October 2022). Besides, according to reports by Russian high-ranking officials in the media, between 1.5 and 2 million Ukrainians left or were deported to the aggressor countries by Autumn 2022. However, in my opinion, these reports do not inspire confidence. So, it seems impossible to determine the number of deported Ukrainians with a high degree of accuracy.

At the same time, the interviewed experts speculated about the possibility of a new wave of forced migration from Ukraine in late autumn 2022 due to expected interruptions in heat and electricity supply in Ukraine. Similar opinions are currently expressed by representatives of the government structures of EU countries – Germany in particular (Deutsche Welle 2022).

There is a significant difference between the number of persons who left Ukraine via the Western border during the war, according to data on the balance of border crossings of the State Border Service of Ukraine (1.7 million in mid-October 2022) and the number of registered forced migrants in foreign European countries (4.2 million). An attempt is made below to explain the possible reasons for this difference based on both confirmed facts and the author's assumptions:

1. The arrival of Ukrainians to the EU from third countries, in particular those who were on vacation or on a business trip before the start of the Russian war against Ukraine.
2. The arrival of Ukrainian citizens from the territory of the aggressor countries.
3. The undercounting of those who left Ukraine in the peak period: Ukrainian border guards in some places did not have time to process all forced migrants and even the counting of the persons who were crossing the border could have errors. Thus, according to SBGSU data, from the beginning of the war until 10 October 2022, about 6 million exits to Poland via the Ukrainian-Polish border were recorded while, according to Polish border guards, the number of entries from Ukraine to Poland during the same period exceeded 6.9 million (Bałakyr 2022).
4. The continuation of those who had actually returned to the homeland being registered as forced migrants from Ukraine.
5. The illegal departure from Ukraine of male Ukrainian citizens between the ages of 18 and 60. This is prohibited during the legal regime of martial law, with the exception of certain categories of persons who are not subject to conscription according to the Law of Ukraine 'On Mobilisation Preparation and Mobilisation' (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2022b) (unfit for military service, single parents, men who have three or more dependent children under the age of 18 or a disabled child, etc.). At the same time, there are reports in the mass media about numerous attempts – both unsuccessful and successful – by men who are subject to mobilisation, to go abroad (BBC 2023; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine (MIAU) 2023).
6. The probable double counting of Ukrainians who were able to register in different EU countries using different passports (Ukrainians, mainly residents of the western regions of the country, often have two valid foreign passports, including those with different Latin transliterations of the Ukrainian surname). In assessing the volume of migration of Ukrainians to all foreign European countries (and not only to EU countries that have an agreed migration policy), such a likelihood is growing.

7. The obtention of temporary protection by Ukrainian migrants who worked in EU countries by 24 February 2022: they could join their family members who left after the beginning of the Russian war against Ukraine or make a temporary formal departure outside the Schengen area zone with a subsequent return.

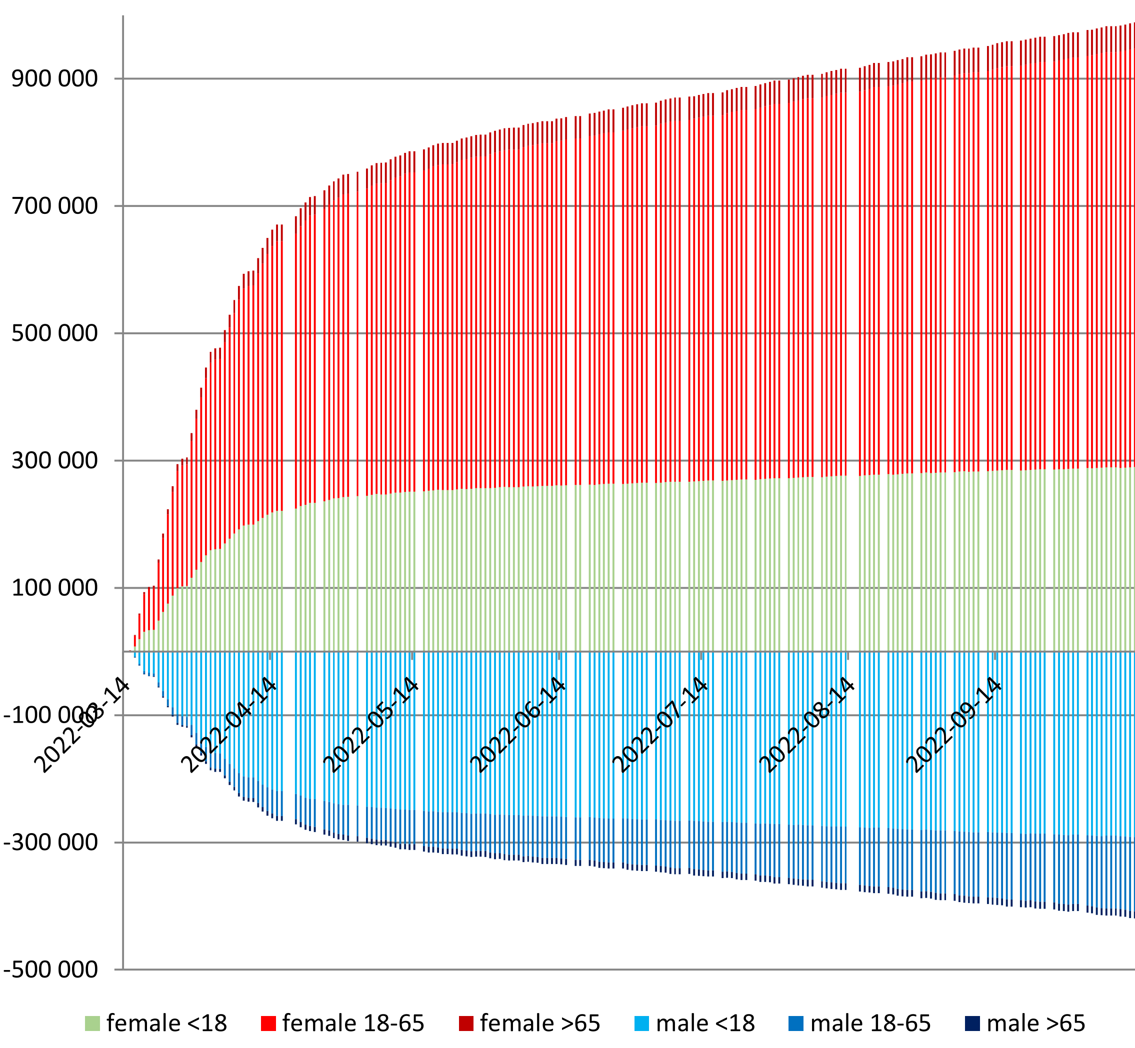
It was mostly women, children and the elderly who left Ukraine. In particular, in the total number of people who left Ukraine in the period 24 February to 10 April 2022, according to SBGSU data, the specific weight of women was 66 per cent. The peculiarities of the age structure of those who have left Ukraine are as follows: 31 per cent of people under 18 years of age and 13 per cent of those over 60 years of age. According to the structural characteristics of those who left, the first day of the war (24 February) stands out, when the ban on the departure of men aged 18–60 who could be mobilised had not yet been put into effect. Accordingly, among those who left Ukraine on 24 February, men of the appropriate age accounted for more than 40.5 per cent while, in the period 25 February to 10 April it was 11.2 per cent. In June 2022, of all Ukrainian adults in European countries, according to one of the surveys, women accounted for 82 per cent (4Service Group 2022a), while only 14 per cent of respondents went abroad without children, 29 per cent with two children and 9 per cent with three or more. According to a number of surveys conducted by the IOM, UNHCR and recipient country organisations, women account for 80–90 per cent of adult forced migrants from Ukraine in the Eastern European countries of the EU and Moldova (EWL 2022; IOM 2022b, d, e; UNHCR 2022a, c).

However, according to some experts interviewed by the author, the share of men among the forced migrants from Ukraine is gradually increasing – due to illegal arrival (mainly to Moldova) or entry through the border with Russia (mainly to Finland). According to the Polish Ministry of Digital Affairs (2022), among the Ukrainians who received PESEL, the share of men aged 18 to 65 increased from between 3.2 and 3.3 per cent in mid-March 2022 to 8.3 per cent in mid-October 2022 (Figure 2).

On the other hand, among third-country nationals forced to leave Ukraine (foreigners who, before the war, resided in Ukraine and were forced to leave), men predominate, their share in Germany being 71 per cent (IOM 2022c) and in Belgium, 90 per cent (IOM 2022a).

Residents of cities dominate among those who have left, with most of them having a higher education or an academic degree. This, obviously, is the basis of their somewhat high competitiveness in the labour market, even if they have to work in a different profession. According to data from the study ‘Refugees from Ukraine in Poland’ conducted by the Migration Platform EWL, the Support Fund for Migrants on the Labour Market – ‘EWL’ – and the Centre for East European Studies of the University of Warsaw, 63 per cent of forced migrants from Ukraine, owing to special decisions of the Polish government, want to get a job in Poland, 61 per cent have higher education, 55 per cent claim knowledge of the English language and 26 per cent knowledge of Polish, at least at a conversational level (Galinfo 2022). At the same time, the main problems for employment are a lack of proper knowledge of the local language, the inadequacy of migrants’ qualifications compared to the needs of the local labour market, family problems related to children and possibly elderly parents who have also left for EU countries (Voskoboynyk 2023).

Figure 2. Number of Ukrainians who have received PESEL in Poland since the beginning of the full-scale war, by gender and age (cumulative data)



Source: calculated from data from Poland's Data Portal (2022).

The situation of forced migrants from Ukraine in Europe

All the experts interviewed noted the positive attitude of the local population towards forced migrants from Ukraine – they have a high opinion of the activities of non-governmental organisations in supporting them. The forced migrant female interviewees from Ukraine noted that they did not even expect such an attitude. There was an unprecedented and positive reaction by the societies of the host countries. Europeans immediately felt solidarity with Ukrainians affected by the Russian war against Ukraine. A survey conducted by the Razumkov Centre (2022) in July–August 2022 showed that Ukrainian forced migrants highly valued the support and assistance provided to them in the country where they were hosted – by the state authorities, non-governmental organisations and the host-country citizens. Some 38 per cent of respondents answered that they were very satisfied with this help, 41 per cent that they were quite satisfied, 8 per cent that they were somewhat dissatisfied and 5 per cent that they were not at all satisfied with it.

In particular, Finns helping Ukrainians drew parallels with the equally unjust Winter War of 1939–1940. Most of the interviewed experts believed that the activities of civil society, non-governmental and international organisations in rendering assistance to Ukrainians are even more effective than those of the central and local authorities. The Ukrainian diaspora was also actively involved in helping the newly arrived. In particular, in the Czech Republic, approximately 28 per cent of those offering solidarity assistance for the accommodation of forced migrants from Ukraine in their homes were Ukrainians who had lived in the Czech Republic before the war (Klimešová *et al.* 2022). The representatives of the so-called ‘old’ diaspora, as well as labour migrants from the period of Ukraine’s independence, all helped to create Ukrainian centres in the recipient countries, organising holidays and meetings (so-called ‘tea parties’). At the same time, some experts note that there were some misunderstandings between Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians.

Assistance to Ukrainians was especially active in the first months. However, a number of interviewed experts noted that it was clear to them from the very beginning that such solidarity could not last long. Gradually, more and more fatigue was felt, in particular amidst increasing inflation in European countries. There was dissatisfaction on the part of the poorer layers of the population of the recipient countries, who felt that the aid was given to Ukrainians and not to them. Migrant communities from outside Europe were also outraged that their compatriots were not received in as kindly a way as Ukrainians, accusing the peoples of the recipient countries of racism.

However, although the interviewed experts report the presence of sentiments of fatigue from the flow of migration from Ukraine, the governments and public opinion of European countries continue to express their readiness for the arrival of refugees from Ukraine and the provision of support for them. According to the survey conducted in Poland by the international organisation Ipsos for OKO.press in September 2022, the question ‘If people from Ukraine who are currently in Poland stayed in Poland for many years, would it be good or bad for Poland?’, the majority of respondents agreed that it would be good: 14 per cent chose the ‘definitely good’ option and 51 per cent said ‘quite good’ (OKO.press 2022). Only 27 per cent of respondents answered negatively. The positive attitude towards Ukrainians is higher among Polish men than among women and increases with the size of the settlement where the respondent lives, their personal income and the social status of the respondent. EU citizens continue to show their unwavering solidarity with Ukraine – 91 per cent of respondents agree with the provision of humanitarian support and 88 per cent are in favour of welcoming into the EU people fleeing the war (Eurobarometer 2023).

According to the results of the research conducted by the Centre for Economic Strategy (CES), 81 per cent of Ukrainian forced migrants speak of a positive or quite positive attitude towards them from the residents of recipient countries; 30 per cent of Ukrainians believe that, over time, the attitude of locals towards them has not changed, 19 per cent believe that it has worsened and 13 per cent that it has improved, others have not decided on the answer (Mykhailyshyna, Samoiliuk and Tomilina 2023). The experts interviewed were sure that cases of biased, unfair treatment of forced migrants from Ukraine by permanent residents of recipient countries are rare and not of a systemic nature. According to these expert interviewees, the most often similar cases are recorded on the part of ethnic Russians. In particular, experts from Estonia and Finland reported on the spread of false information about the behaviour of newly arrived Ukrainians, with denials of the right to free travel and opposition to the display of Ukrainian flags. At the same time, experts also mentioned the cases of the participation of individuals from among ethnic Russians in providing aid and volunteering.

However, experts have reported facts which show that, unfortunately, not all Ukrainian migrants realise that the help from European countries and societies is a manifestation of goodwill and that the citizens of the recipient countries do not owe them anything. Some (especially affluent) forced migrants expressed dissatisfaction with the accommodation and with the response of volunteers to specific non-standard needs and

wishes. However, according to the experts, the Ukrainian organisations themselves are trying to stop such manifestations. There are also cases of abuse of free travel opportunities.

There are also residents of Ukraine who are using the situation of a full-scale invasion in order to implement a previously planned work (less often, tourist) trip – a number of interviewed experts personally know such people. This is indirectly evidenced by specifities in the distribution of Ukrainian forced migrants by region of origin – in particular, an increased share of people from the western oblasts which, on the one hand, are the traditional regions of origin of labour migrants from Ukraine and, on the other, have themselves become important regions of IDP resettlement. Thus, as of the beginning of April 2022, according to the data of the 4Service Group Company (2022b), the Lviv oblast, alongside the regions of hostilities, ranked 8th among Ukrainian regions in terms of the number of forced migrants. According to the survey of Ukrainian forced migrants in the Czech Republic (Klimešová *et al.* 2022), the fourth place among their regions of origin is occupied by Zakarpattia Oblast – the main place of origin of pre-war Ukrainian labour migrants to the Czech Republic (ILO 2013). It is inferior only to the city of Kyiv, Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk Oblasts.

According to the Centre for Economic Strategy research, 29 per cent of Ukrainian forced migrants are ‘quasi-labour migrants’, who left not only for security reasons but also to find work. These migrants are more likely to be from Western Ukraine and their decision to return will not be affected by the end of the war (Mykhailyshyna *et al.* 2023). According to the reports by my expert interviewees, ‘residents of Western Ukraine, who previously travelled for three months, now receive temporary protection and the official right to employment’ and ‘some Ukrainians who planned to migrate but did not take active action, were stimulated by the situation of a full-scale invasion’. Labour migrants who lived in EU countries before the war are joining their families who entered after 24 February.

To identify the problems of forced migrants from Ukraine, a points assessment was used. Experts were asked about the problems faced by forced migrants from Ukraine. The question was open, without predicting the options for answers. Each problem that was mentioned by an expert (a forced migrant from Ukraine or a representative of the recipient country) was assigned 1 point. However, if the expert defined a problem as the main one, 2 points were given; if the expert named only one problem and did not mention others, the mentioned problem received 3 points. As the final result, the following hierarchy of problems was obtained:

1. Housing problems, the absolute leader (sum of points = 21, which is 2.6–3.5 times more than problems that occupied places 2–5 in the hierarchy). According to the experts, at the end of the summer – beginning of the autumn 2022, the possibilities of living with families of citizens of the recipient countries will run out, ‘and it is difficult and expensive to find housing on the free market’.
2. Employment (8 points), in particular, difficulties in finding a job that corresponds to qualifications; low wages in available jobs.
3. The problem of not knowing the language of the recipient country (7 points) is relevant for EU countries – including the Baltic countries – but is completely irrelevant for Moldova.
4. Two problems received 6 points each. One of them is the problem of uncertainty: people do not know when and if they will be able to return home. They have a hard time deciding whether they should learn the language, get a job, send their children to school/kindergarten or, on the contrary, wait for the end of the crisis. The other problem is excessive bureaucracy and length of registration procedures, which were especially emphasised by permanent and forced temporary residents of Germany: ‘long processing time, very complicated procedures, everything in paper form’. At the same time, as the representative of Germany noted, ‘For Ukrainians, this waiting (up to several months) looks long but the Germans say that it is very fast’.

Moreover, the experts also mentioned the problems of the load on the education system in the host countries (school and preschool), homesickness, despair over the impossibility of a quick return, problems of financial

support, psychological problems, access to state medicine ('with private – no problem') and the threat of sexual harassment ('women received housing offers from men').

This hierarchy of problems differs from those revealed by the migrant survey. According to one of the surveys conducted by Ukrainian sociological structure, the most acute problem for forced external migrants is financial support (Gradus Research Company 2022a). According to 4Service Group (2022a), separation from relatives and friends and homesickness are other main problems. Anxiety about what is happening in Ukraine, concern for the relatives and loved ones who remained in Ukraine, and longing for the homeland were the most often mentioned by the respondents of another survey (Razumkov Centre 2022).

Obviously, this difference is related to the fact that migrants talk about what is worrying them right now, causing the greatest emotional experiences. Experts assess the situation more carefully, including an assessment of future changes. Moreover, the interviews with experts which I conducted did not include a list of possible answers, while the respondents of sociological surveys chose from a variety of options offered.

During the interview, experts from among the representatives of the recipient countries were asked to evaluate on a 5-point scale (1 = the minimum rating, 5 = the maximum) the impact of the forced migration of Ukrainians on various local markets (food and non-food products, labour, housing, educational services, medical services, transport services). According to the experts, the impact of forced migration from Ukraine on the housing market of the host countries is the most significant (average score – 3.4 out of a possible 5). The experts note that it is almost impossible to rent an apartment in the capitals of the main recipient countries of Ukrainian forced migration – Warsaw, Berlin and Prague. The impact of forced migration caused by the Russian war against Ukraine on the markets of medical and educational services is also quite high, while the differential impact of migration from Ukraine was noted in relation to the latter – education, which is increased in the segment on teaching local languages. According to the experts, the impact of forced migration on labour markets and transport services is moderate. At the same time, the difference in the impact on the official and unofficial (so-called 'black') labour market was also noted: the latter was much more significantly affected by the new migration from Ukraine because Ukrainian forced migrants try to find a job without registration more often than local residents. Interviewed experts reported on the existence of cases of entrepreneurial activities initiated by forced migrants from Ukraine. This mainly concerns the provision of cosmetic services, the manufacture of souvenirs (such activities are not always officially registered), as well as the organisation of ethnic catering establishments. The reports of experts about the entrepreneurial activities of Ukrainian forced migrants are confirmed by statistical data. In particular, 10,200 sole proprietorships founded by people with Ukrainian citizenship started operating in Poland between January and September 2022. Ukrainian female entrepreneurs the most often offered hairdressing and other beauty services (Dębkowska, Kłosiewicz-Górecka, Szymańska, Wejt-Knyżewska and Zybertowicz 2022). At the same time, according to the survey of Ukrainian forced migrants in the Czech Republic (Klimešová et al. 2022), the economic potential of Ukrainian forced migrants is not used enough.

The experts' estimates regarding the impact of the arrival of forced migrants on the food and non-food markets are the lowest. However, in particular in the Czech Republic, after the beginning of the Russian war against Ukraine, supermarkets more often began to sell buckwheat (the most popular type of cereal for Ukrainians). In general, the experts from Poland rated the impact of forced migration from Ukraine on local markets higher than did the representatives of other countries. This assessment of the impact of the forced migration of Ukrainians on local markets for goods and services reflects the opinions of the interviewed experts and does not claim to be absolute.

The full-scale war unleashed by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the scale of forced migration caused by it – unprecedented since the Second World War – on the one hand are serious problems and restrictions to the development of the country; however, on the other hand, these processes have opened up

previously unavailable opportunities for the formation of a positive image of Ukraine and Ukrainians in the world, especially in the countries of the European Union. Though employers in EU countries had previously perceived Ukrainian employees to be hard-working and conscientious workers, at the same time, in European societies, the perception of Ukrainian citizens as performers of low- and medium-skilled jobs prevailed (Zymnin 2021). This is due to the fact that the period of formation of labour migration from Ukraine (early and mid-1990s) was characterised by a sharp decline in the standard of living of the population, a very low level of wages and the spread of hidden unemployment. Accordingly, labour migrants from Ukraine accepted any opportunity to earn money abroad and usually performed work that required lower qualifications than they had – in particular, for example, teachers worked as caregivers, female doctors worked as nurses and men with a high level of education were employed as construction workers. Thus, according to the SSSU (2017), in 2015–2017, only a little over a quarter of Ukrainian employees had a job abroad which matched their qualifications obtained in Ukraine. Instead, more than a third of the employees worked in jobs that do not require qualifications. At the same time, a third of labour migrants had a higher education (full or basic) (SSSU 2017). During their stay in Ukraine (both before and after leaving), highly educated migrants were rarely involved in low-skilled jobs but, once abroad, were engaged in low-skilled jobs more often than persons with an average level of education (Pyrozhkov *et al.* 2018). By the end of the twentieth century, the contingent of wage-earners generally had stabilised and, at least up until 2014, was almost never replenished with new groups of persons. Accordingly, both the employment behaviour of labour migrants from Ukraine and the perceptions of them by the societies of the recipient countries were conserved.

It was most probably the wave of forced migration in 2022 which led to the breaking of some dominant stereotypes about Ukrainians in the recipient countries. The majority of forced external migrants are women with higher education, usually high (by Ukrainian standards) incomes and a fairly high social status in their places of origin. It is not surprising that these migrant women do not accept low-skilled work and are ready to master the language of the host country in order to increase their competitiveness in the labour market (Subotina 2022). The inclusion of Ukrainian children in the school education of the host countries showed a more-than-decent level of training and acquisition of knowledge. Notably, the French media have already written – and more than once – about the teachers' surprise at the level of knowledge of Ukrainian children in mathematics (*Le Parisien* 2022). At the same time, information is spreading in the West about the speed at which weapons produced by NATO countries are being mastered by the Ukrainian military. In addition, the resettlement of a significant number of forced migrants from Ukraine in the midst of Russian aggression increases the interest of broad sections of the EU population in recent and contemporary events in Ukraine (both in the current armed struggle against a stronger enemy and in past protests against the arbitrariness of the authorities: the Revolution on Granite, the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity). In 2022, the keyword 'Ukraine' hit an all-time record on Google in terms of the number of searches globally – according to Brand Ukraine (2022), the two most popular characteristics of Ukraine in 2022 were 'The nation of heroes' and 'Democratic country', together representing almost half of the publications that contained reputational attributes. 'The Member of the European Family' attribute received a 17 per cent share, being the third most widely spread characteristic of Ukraine in the media.

All this helps to consolidate the image of Ukrainians as a freedom-loving nation, with a high level of education and qualifications and capable of acquiring new knowledge and skills. Moreover, this is realised not only by the residents of the EU countries but also by the Ukrainians themselves.

According to a survey conducted by the Gradus Research Company, forced external migrants note that, compared to the EU countries, the mentality and way of life are better in Ukraine, as is the digitalisation of public and commercial services, the level of bureaucracy in government bodies, the size of utility tariffs, the opening hours of shops, food establishments, pharmacies, the ratio of quality/cost of services in the field of

beauty, the ease and convenience of connecting and replenishing a mobile phone, the speed and convenience of money transfers, the prevalence and quality of food establishments/cafes, the quality and speed of the Internet, the speed and quality of the logistics sector and of postal/courier shipments. On the other hand, compared to the EU countries, the quality of public transport work, urban infrastructure development, drinking water from the tap, the sorting and proper disposal of rubbish, the creation of special conditions for people with disabilities, social protection from the state, the rate of wages and compliance with law and order are much worse (Gradus Research Company 2022b).

The decision to return is influenced more strongly by the situation in Ukraine rather than the situation in recipient countries. According to CES research, the most important factors for the return of Ukrainian forced migrants to their home country will be security conditions: the final end of the war (51 per cent) and the cessation of hostilities and airstrikes in their native city (34 per cent); the quality of life in Ukraine – the availability of decent employment (28 per cent) and the higher level of life (21 per cent) (Mykhailyshyna *et al*. 2023). Factors limiting the possibilities of staying in recipient countries (expiry of temporary shelter, the lack of affordable housing abroad) are considered less significant than the cessation of hostilities in the respondents' regions of origin and restoration of their infrastructure. However, at least some of the forced migrants are ready to return to Ukraine even if it is impossible to return to the region of their origin.

Policy recommendations

In today's conditions, the policy of the government of Ukraine should be aimed at cooperation and maintaining relations with Ukrainians abroad. The peculiarity of the Ukrainian diaspora is that it is formed by both citizens of other countries (persons of Ukrainian origin) and citizens of Ukraine who permanently or temporary live abroad. Currently, the volume of the Ukrainian diaspora is actually increasing due to the forced external migrants. The state pays considerable attention to cooperation with the diaspora but new realities require the modernisation of the state policy regarding this.

A new direction of state cooperation with non-governmental organisations of Ukrainians abroad (primarily in EU countries) is to stimulate the participation of the latter in solving the problems of forced external migrants. Using the experience of representatives of the diaspora (both citizens of the recipient countries of Ukrainian origin and labour migrants) can facilitate the adaptation of forced external migrants to living conditions in recipient countries. In this context, it seems necessary to strengthen the capabilities of the Department for Ukrainians Worldwide and the Humanitarian Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

The fundamental problem with state policy in Ukraine regarding the diaspora is the problem of the legislative definition of this concept. There is no official definition of the term 'diaspora' in the Legislation of Ukraine, although the corresponding word is used in a number of normative acts. It is time to provide opportunities for Ukrainians to obtain Ukrainian citizenship without renouncing their existing citizenship of another country. The issue of the possibility of recognising multiple citizenships in Ukraine – both before the full-scale invasion and now – is being discussed in both expert and political communities.

For labour migrants and other representatives of the diaspora among Ukrainian citizens, the problem of participation in elections is significant. According to the legislation of Ukraine, a voter who lives or is on the territory of a foreign country on the day of voting can participate in the elections for the President of Ukraine but, for Verkhovna Rada (the unicameral parliament), the same voter has the right to vote in the election of deputies only, according to the nationwide electoral list (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2022a). However, in fact, only persons who are on the consular register and those who, no later than five days before the elections, applied for their inclusion on the lists, can actually vote in the elections of the President and People's Deputies

of Ukraine from outside Ukraine, in diplomatic offices for voting. Citizens are faced with the need to visit consular offices twice (to submit an application and actually to vote), which often requires considerable time and money. The level of consular registration of citizens of Ukraine living abroad is low. A means of ensuring the participation of representatives of the diaspora in the elections of the President and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine could be the implementation of a procedure for voting by correspondence.

The creation and expansion of opportunities for the participation of representatives of the diaspora (both citizens of Ukraine and non-citizens) in the life of the country will contribute to the strengthening of cooperation between the state and diasporas, which will then provide both economic and political benefits for Ukraine. As world experience shows, using the potential of diasporas is a means of strengthening the influence of the country of their origin.

The Ukrainian government should, in every possible way, maintain contact with their compatriots and develop opportunities for distance education for the children of migrants. The functioning of the International Ukrainian School (IUS), established in 2007, is a successful example of cooperation with the diaspora; currently the issue of adapting IUS activities to new realities is relevant, in particular concerning providing the children of forced migrants with opportunities to combine education in the schools in the recipient countries with distance learning according to the programme of the IUS, achieved by distributing video recordings of lessons and developing flexible performance monitoring systems. It is necessary to develop and approve procedures for the recognition of documents on the periods and content of education in order to ensure the continuation of the education of returnee migrant children in the institutions of secondary and vocational education of Ukraine.

It is necessary to provide opportunities for remote work for forced migrants who are employees of Ukrainian enterprises, institutions and organisations, whose activities do not require a direct presence in the workplace (except for work that involves access to classified information). The implementation of this measure requires solving the issue of the avoidance of double taxation in accordance with the bilateral agreements. Today, similar agreements are valid between Ukraine and almost all European countries,[5] in particular all EU countries (Ministry of Finance of Ukraine 2022). The Ukrainian government should sort out this issue and, if necessary, initiate changes to the agreements. One of the interviewed forced migrants from Ukraine expressed the opinion that ‘dismissal from work can be an argument for not returning’. Moreover, these contingents of people need psychological support, which should be provided by the consular services. People should be helped to organise meetings (for example, tea parties) in consulates.

In addition, the Ukrainian government should explain to Ukrainian forced migrants (through cooperation with public organisations of Ukrainian migrants and targeted advertising in social networks) that they should learn the local language (for those who speak English, learning at least the basic phrases necessary for communication in administrative centres, shops, etc.) and understand the cancellation of free transport (the purpose of its introduction was not to facilitate travel but to provide opportunities to reach the desired location) and resettlement.

An important task for the Ukrainian state is to confirm the educational and qualification levels of Ukrainian forced migrants at their request, since not all of them were able to take their educational diplomas with them. A procedure should be set up for requests from the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to be transmitted to the educational institutions of Ukraine and to spread information among migrants about such opportunities.

The development of strategic programmes that stimulate return should begin now – an important element of which should be the prevention of biased attitudes towards forced external migrants, thus avoiding the sharp arguments among the citizens of Ukraine regarding who was where during the war. We must realise that we are all Ukrainians.

The most acute problem is returning Ukrainian citizens deported to the territory of the aggressor country. Effective implementation of this direction of state policy requires constant interaction with international organisations and partner states. In order to increase the efficiency of the state's actions in this area, it is advisable to create a special unit within the structure of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Informational support for Ukrainians abroad is an important tool for strengthening relations with both forced and labour migrants. This includes the development of a portal with information on the legislation of the recipient countries, employment conditions, activities of economic entities that provide mediation services in the employment of Ukrainian citizens abroad and the creation of information desks at diplomatic missions of Ukraine, including on public grounds (at the expense of Ukrainian communities in the respective countries).

Various countries have accumulated significant experience in successfully attracting earnings of migrants to the economy, especially on the basis of parity financing of the organisation of businesses by migrants and the state. Activation of the use of the potential of cooperation with labour migrants in the economic sphere is becoming one of the most urgent tasks of Ukraine's post-war development policy. It is necessary to develop and adopt an appropriate programme that would be based on the achievements of world experience. It is advisable to involve in the development of the programme the representatives of businesses, trade unions, the World Congress of Ukrainians, associations of labour migrants, other interested non-governmental organisations, experts and representatives of the regions and communities the most affected by mass labour migration.

It is necessary to improve the laws and regulations of Ukraine regarding the confirmation of the results of the informal professional training of labour migrants who are returning to Ukraine. In particular, the list of labour professions whose qualification level can be confirmed based on the results of informal vocational training should be expanded and return migrants should be exempt from paying for such qualification confirmation services.

The state should maintain relations with Ukrainian students and scientists who work or undergo internships in EU countries. In particular, activities should be intensified to ensure support from the European Commission for financing (on a grant basis) joint scientific projects between the teams of Ukrainian scientific institutions and the scientific institutions of EU countries in which Ukrainian scientists work.

The ageing of the population, characteristic of all nations of European origin, inevitably leads to a reduction in the size of the labour force. In Ukraine, this process is intensified due to the large-scale departure of able-bodied citizens. Under these conditions, almost the only means of providing the labour market with workers is the attraction of immigrants. Even before the full-scale invasion by the troops of the aggressor country, Ukraine had a low level of attractiveness for citizens of other countries; however, the situation may change in the event of a successful attraction of foreign investments in the process of post-war state development.

Today, immigration policy should focus on improving the situation and facilitating the integration of those foreigners who are already in Ukraine or who will return after the end of the war. It seems appropriate to classify foreign students who are studying or have successfully completed their studies in Ukraine into the category of persons who do not need a permit to do the work of a foreigner (provided they are employed in jobs that match the profile and level of education received in Ukraine). In order to find a job, foreign graduates from Ukrainian higher education institutions should be given the opportunity to remain on the territory of Ukraine for a year after completing their studies. In addition, the right to work without a special permit should also be granted to persons in respect of whom the State Migration Service of Ukraine has made a decision to process documents to resolve the issue of recognising a person as a refugee or a person in need of additional protection.

Conclusion

The impact of a full-scale war on the future demographic situation in Ukraine will be reflected primarily in migration losses, which will have the greatest impact on demographic dynamics. The scale of forced migration from Ukraine is significant, although much smaller than estimates based on the uncritical use of the border-crossing statistics indicate. In fact, the lion's share of these crossings, especially since the beginning of April 2022, can be attributed to various forms of pendulum migration. Research has confirmed that some residents of Ukraine use the situation of a full-scale invasion in order to implement a previously planned work or tourist trip.

The main problems of forced migrants from Ukraine according to experts' interviews and surveys with migrants are long-term housing, finding a suitable job, learning the language, financial support, separation from the relatives and friends, homesickness and anxiety about what is happening in Ukraine. Ukrainians continue to enlist the support of the local population of European countries, despite the widespread sentiments of fatigue following the flows of migration from Ukraine.

Migration policy during the war period and immediately after its end should be aimed at reducing the volume of migration losses, improving the situation of forced external migrants, providing the economy with a labour force during the post-war revival of Ukraine and maximising the use of the results of migration in the interests of development. Since women of childbearing age and children predominate among those Ukrainians who left for European countries, the question of the post-war return of compatriots is perhaps the most important in the context of the preservation of the Ukrainian nation and national security.

The development and implementation of measures aimed at attracting foreign citizens to Ukraine is not timely right now and should be carried out only in the process of post-war revival. However, it is already necessary to contribute to the improvement of the situation of those foreigners who remained in Ukraine or who plan to return after the end of the war (chiefly, foreign students).

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Notes

1. According to the official terminology of the Ukrainian Government.
2. PESEL in Poland (*Powszechny Elektroniczny System Ewidencji Ludności*) is the universal number of the general electronic system of population registration.

3. The author considers Europe as a political rather than a geographical concept. The countries of the south Caucasus and Turkey are recognised as European countries because they are members of the Council of Europe.
4. According to the original terminology – Refugees from Ukraine registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe.
5. Except Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lichtenstein and Kosovo (which is not recognised by Ukraine).

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Annex 1

Table A1. The list of interviewed experts

N	Type of activity and scientific interest (for scientists)	Status	Country and region* of residence at the time of the interview	Country and region* of residence before 24/02/2022**
1	Science, migration studies	IDP	Ukraine, Vinnytsia oblast	Ukraine, Kyiv city
2	Science, migration studies	IDP	Ukraine, Kyiv oblast	Ukraine, Kyiv city
3	Science, migration studies	Temporary protection	Germany	Ukraine, Kyiv city
4	Science, migration studies	Temporary protection	Poland	Ukraine, Khmelnytsky oblast
5	Science, social studies	Temporary protection	Germany	Ukraine, Kyiv city
6	Science, demography	Representative of the recipient country	France	
7	Science, political studies	Representative of the recipient country	Estonia	
8	Science, demography	Representative of the recipient region	Ukraine, Ternopil oblast	

Table A1. The list of interviewed experts (cont.)

N	Type of activity and scientific interest (for scientists)	Status	Country and region* of residence at the time of the interview	Country and region* of residence before 24/02/2022**
9	Science, migration studies	Representative of the recipient region	Ukraine, Zakarpattia oblast	
10	Local authority	Representative of the recipient region	Ukraine, Lviv oblast	
11	Science, migration studies	Representative of the recipient region	Ukraine, Lviv oblast	
12	Science, migration studies	Representative of the recipient country	Germany	
13	Science, migration studies	Representative of the recipient country	Poland	
14	Science, migration studies	Representative of the recipient country	Finland	
15	Science, social studies	Temporary protection	Finland	Ukraine, Kharkiv oblast
16	Science, migration studies	Representative of the recipient country	Czech Republic	
17	Science, migration studies	Representative of the recipient country	Moldova	
18	Science, migration studies	Representative of the recipient country	Hungary	
19	Science, migration studies	Representative of the recipient country	Poland	
20	Science, migration studies	Representative of the recipient country	Germany	
21	Science, migration studies	Representative of the recipient region	Ukraine, Lviv oblast	
22	Local authority	Representative of the recipient region	Ukraine, Ternopil oblast	
23	Authority	Representative of the recipient country	Moldova	

* Regions are specified only for Ukraine.

** If the two places of residence are different.

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Following the EU Response to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine? The Implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive in Poland

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In 2022, upon the unexpected activation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) by the Council Implementing Decision 2022/382, the Member States had to revive the EU law that had not been used for over 20 years. Poland adopted a new law that was aimed at offering extended rights to Ukrainian nationals and their family members. Other persons enjoying temporary protection under EU law were offered general protection available in Poland since 2003. This contribution sets out to answer the question of whether Poland followed the TPD and the Council Implementing Decision 2022/382 in its two-way response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The article is based on a comparative analysis of Polish and EU law, doctrinal views concerning temporary protection and available information about domestic practice. It focuses on the following areas of interest: eligibility for temporary protection, residence permits, accommodation, family reunification, returns and measures after temporary protection ends, and remedies. The analysis conducted showed that Polish law on temporary protection is not fully compatible with the respective EU law. In the selected areas of interest, Poland either did not thoroughly follow the Council Implementing Decision 2022/382 or did not meet the minimum standards arising from the TPD.

Keywords: temporary protection, implementation, Ukraine, Poland, EU law

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Introduction

After more than 20 years since its adoption, the Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof (hereinafter, the Temporary Protection Directive), has finally been activated. Despite national asylum systems already being under significant pressure and in spite of many calls to use the EU temporary protection mechanism earlier, the Council invariably repeated that the conditions to activate the directive were not fulfilled (Beirens, Maas, Petronella and van der Velden 2016: 13, 27–36, 138–140; Ineli-Ciger 2018: 158–159). Only the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which began on 24 February 2022, prompted the quick and strong reaction of the EU and Member States. On 4 March 2022, the Council adopted the Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection (hereinafter, the Council Implementing Decision). Now, both the Temporary Protection Directive and the Council Implementing Decision constitute a legal framework for the EU temporary protection mechanism intended for 'persons displaced from Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022, as a result of the military invasion by Russian armed forces' (as specified in Article 2 of the Council Implementing Decision). The activation of the Temporary Protection Directive challenged the Member States with the task of reviving the EU law that was considered – due to its long-lasting non-activation – 'increasingly irrelevant' (Skordas 2022: 1179), a 'failed instrument' and a 'waste of paper' (Gluns and Wessels 2017: 82–83).

In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Poland adopted the Act of 12 March 2022 on the Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals in relation to the Armed Conflict in this State[1] (hereinafter: the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals). However, this act does not apply to all persons fleeing Ukraine or even to all persons mentioned in Article 2 of the Council Implementing Decision. Only Ukrainian nationals and some of their family members can benefit from this new and special temporary protection mechanism. Other persons enjoying temporary protection according to the Council Implementing Decision benefit from the general temporary protection mechanism that has been in force in Poland since 2003 (Articles 106–118a of the Act of 21 July 2003 on the Protection of Foreigners in Poland,[2] hereinafter: the Protection Act). In Poland, thus, two different temporary protection mechanisms remain in force in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine: the 'special' one for Ukrainian nationals and some of their family members (under the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals) and the 'general' one (under the Protection Act) applicable to all the other persons enjoying temporary protection under the Council Implementing Decision – i.e. international protection beneficiaries in Ukraine, their family members and permanent residence holders in Ukraine (see also Jaroszewicz and Krępa 2023: 166–167). The status of a person enjoying temporary protection in Poland and the scope of rights associated with this status differ depending on which of those two acts applies (for more, see Łysienia 2023: 19–38).

The Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals and the Protection Act are both intended to implement the Temporary Protection Directive and the Council Implementing Decision in Poland. It is unclear why the Polish authorities decided to create two temporary protection mechanisms in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. One of the aims of the Protection Act was to implement the Temporary Protection Directive in Poland (Rada Ministrów 2003; Sadowski 2023: 340). Accordingly, the Protection Act was put into effect immediately after the Council Implementing Decision was issued (Łysienia 2023: 3). Despite this, the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals was adopted (see, critically, Klaus 2022: 28), supposedly to operationalise the protection at a national level (Jaroszewicz and Krępa 2023: 167) and to provide Ukrainian nationals with a greater scope of protection than under the minimum standards offered by EU law (Golec *et al.* 2022; Grzelak-Bach 2022).

However, the situation of persons enjoying special temporary protection in Poland is not always better than that of other beneficiaries. Moreover, the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals strays away from the minimum standards of the Temporary Protection Directive more than the Protection Act, as is shown in more detail below.

This article intends to determine whether and to what extent Poland follows the EU law on temporary protection in its two-way response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In particular, the article aims at identifying the most pronounced diversions from the Temporary Protection Directive and the Council Implementing Decision that occurred in the respective Polish law until the end of March 2023. To achieve this, it relies on a comparative analysis of the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals and the Protection Act on the one hand and the Temporary Protection Directive and the Council Implementing Decision on the other. Moreover, it draws from information available concerning the respective practice in Poland and doctrinal views regarding both Polish and EU temporary protection.

Scope and limitations

This article offers a preliminary view on the divergences between the Polish and the EU law on temporary protection applied in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Conducting an analysis in this regard – especially at this point in time – had its limitations and challenges, as I describe briefly below. They pertained to the quality of the respective EU and Polish laws, the limited academic interest thus far as regards temporary protection and the insufficiency of data concerning the other Members States' practice.

The quality of the EU and Polish law on temporary protection poses a challenge for a comparative study. The Temporary Protection Directive was the first asylum directive adopted in the EU (Skordas 2022: 1178). Its wording often lacks precision and thoroughness (Carrera, Ineli-Ciger, Vosyliute and Brumat 2022: 15–16; Gluns and Wessels 2017: 75, 82; Küçük 2023: 7–8), prompting diverse interpretations of the directive at a national level. In addition, the directive was never interpreted by the Court of Justice of the EU, so any doubts concerning its scope have not been clarified and the Member States were not pushed by the Court to offer a higher standard of protection where needed (as they were with regards to the other asylum directives, see Łysienia 2022: 469–470). Hence, the degree of uncertainty as regards this directive is high. The new Polish law on temporary protection, being written in a hurry in February and March 2022, has also been far from clear. Multiple legislative efforts were required to address the lack of clarity, inconsistencies and gaps that have arisen since its adoption. As of 31 March 2023, the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals has been amended 15 times. Despite these numerous changes, the Polish law on temporary protection is still ambiguous and defective. Moreover, the comparison of the respective Polish and EU laws is not supported by the fact that the Polish translation of the Temporary Protection Directive is far from perfect too: it differs from the English or French version in few instances.[3]

Furthermore, the lack of activation of the Temporary Protection Directive for over 20 years resulted in limited academic interest in this field. Despite the slowly growing attention in recent years (Ineli-Ciger 2018: 5; Thym 2022), academic views on temporary protection under both EU and Polish law are still limited (for Poland, see Chlebny 2020: 1242–1256). Before the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, the debate focused mostly on the issue of why the Temporary Protection Directive had not yet been used in practice (e.g. Gluns and Wessels 2017). Since 2022, the doctrine has been predominantly engrossed in questions concerning the directive being finally activated (e.g. Ineli-Ciger 2022), its underpinning and results in discrimination and racism (e.g. Costello and Foster 2022; Kienast, Tan and Vedsted-Hansen 2023; Skordas 2023) and the novelty of the free movement of persons enjoying temporary protection (e.g. Küçük 2022; Thym 2022). Academic

publications scrutinising what the obligations of the Member States are towards persons enjoying temporary protection arising from EU law are, in fact, rare (see Peers 2015: 571–598; Skordas 2022: 1177–1228).

Answers concerning the content of the temporary protection that is required under the Temporary Protection Directive cannot thus far also be found in the Member States' practice hitherto. The EU law on temporary protection has never before been applied. Hence, no earlier practice in this regard exists that could have been scrutinised and compared with the legal situation of persons fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Furthermore, research concerning the implementation of the Council Implementing Decision and the Temporary Protection Directive in the Member States since March 2022 (e.g. FRA 2022; Nagy 2023; Nordic Council of Ministers 2022; UNHCR 2022) is still in the preliminary stages. Its results hitherto are insufficient to comprehensively answer the question of whether there is a common understanding of the minimum standards offered by the directive to persons enjoying temporary protection.

Taking into account the abovementioned limitations and challenges, this article offers a preliminary view of the scope of incompatibility of the Polish and EU laws on temporary protection. It focuses on the following topics: eligibility for temporary protection, residence permits, accommodation, family reunification, returns and measures after temporary protection ends, and remedies. These areas of interest have been chosen for the analysis because the EU law on temporary protection is the most comprehensible in this particular regard and the ambiguity of the corresponding Polish law is often counterbalanced by sufficient information about the practice. Moreover, the rules concerning the abovementioned subject matters provided for in the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals and the Protection Act, when compared with the Temporary Protection Directive and the Council Implementing Decision, seem to raise the most prominent controversy. Opinions on the incompatibility of the EU and the Polish law concerning the issues in question have been regularly voiced in the literature (see e.g. Jarosz and Klaus 2023: 27; Klaus 2022: 27–30, 36, 85; Noll and Gunneflo 2007: 17, 53, 55, 68; Sadowski 2023: 350) and by non-governmental and international organisations (Białas and Jagura 2022; ECRE 2023: 2; SIP 2023). These critical views have been scrutinised and confronted in order to determine the scope of divergence between the EU and the Polish law on temporary protection in the selected areas of interest.

Implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive in Poland

Eligibility

The Council Implementing Decision (in Article 2) clearly defines persons who are enjoying temporary protection following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Temporary protection has been offered only to those 'persons displaced from Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022, as a result of the military invasion by Russian armed forces' – i.e. Ukrainian nationals residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022; beneficiaries of international protection or the equivalent national protection in Ukraine (hereinafter: international protection beneficiaries in Ukraine) as well as their family members. Additionally, EU temporary protection or adequate national protection must be given to holders of valid Ukrainian permanent residence permits (hereinafter: permanent residence holders in Ukraine), who are unable to return in safe and durable conditions to their country or region of origin. Member States may also decide to extend the temporary protection to other persons.

Meanwhile, the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals applies only to Ukrainian nationals and some of their family members (Article 1(1) and (2)). Other persons mentioned in the Council Implementing Decision – international protection beneficiaries in Ukraine with their family members, and permanent residence holders in Ukraine – are eligible for temporary protection under the Protection Act (see, critically, Klaus 2022: 28–29).

Special and general temporary protection mechanisms offer dissimilar status and rights to their beneficiaries (for more, see Łysienia 2023: 19–38). Meanwhile, the Council clearly indicated in Article 2(1) of its decision that Ukrainian nationals and international protection beneficiaries in Ukraine fleeing the Russian invasion must be granted temporary protection. Only permanent residence holders in Ukraine are allowed to be given either temporary protection or adequate national protection (in accordance with Article 2(2) of the Council Implementing Decision). Hence, only the situation of permanent residence holders in Ukraine may be differentiated from the situation of the other persons enjoying temporary protection in accordance with the Council Implementing Decision (see, critically as regards this differentiation, Klaus and Górczyńska 2022: 89). International protection beneficiaries should be given the same protection as Ukrainian nationals. This interpretation is confirmed by Recitals 11 and 12 in the preamble to the Council Implementing Decision. Meanwhile, in Poland, international protection beneficiaries in Ukraine are offered the same protection as permanent residence holders in this country, which is different from the temporary protection given to Ukrainian nationals. It clearly runs counter to the Council Implementing Decision (cf. Sadowski 2023: 349).

Moreover, not all family members mentioned in the Council Implementing Decision are covered by the protection offered by the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals (Klaus and Górczyńska 2022: 90; SIP 2023: 2). This law applies only to the spouses of Ukrainian nationals, with the exception of Polish and EU citizens (see Article 1(2)). The inclusion of third-country nationals (TCNs) who are married to Ukrainian nationals is in accordance with Article 2(4) of the Council Implementing Decision (defining who a family member is, including – as specified in letter (a) – spouses) and Articles 1 and 2(c) of the Temporary Protection Directive (confirming that temporary protection is provided only for TCNs, see also Ineli-Ciger 2018: 151; Skordas 2022: 1185). Notwithstanding, it should not be overlooked that, as expected (Milios 2023: 228), the unmarried partners of Ukrainian nationals and of international protection beneficiaries in Ukraine, as mentioned in Article 2(4)(a) of the Council Implementing Decision, are not eligible for temporary protection in Poland (cf. Klaus 2022: 29; Sadowski 2023: 347–348).

Despite the Council's insistence on the preservation of the family unity (Recital 11 in the preamble to the Council Implementing Decision; Chlebny 2022: 151), the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals omits other non-Ukrainian family members of Ukrainian nationals mentioned in Article 2(4) of the Council Implementing Decision – i.e. 'minor unmarried children' and 'other close relatives who lived together as part of the family unit at the time of the circumstances surrounding the mass influx of displaced persons, and who were wholly or mainly dependent' on a Ukrainian national. As explained in more detail below, this omission cannot be rectified by the adoption of the special rules concerning children born in Poland and pertaining to the 'closest family' of Ukrainian nationals who have been granted the 'Pole's Card' (*Karta Polaka*) – a document confirming that the person concerned belongs to the Polish nation (for more on the 'Pole's Card', see Pudzianowska 2021). The Council Implementing Decision does not condition the obtaining of temporary protection due to being born in a Member State or being a family member of a person belonging to a particular EU nation.

Keeping the non-Ukrainian minor children of Ukrainian nationals out of the scope of the special temporary protection mechanism cannot be remedied by the rule that a child born in Poland whose mother enjoys temporary protection there is entitled to legally stay as long as his/her mother has this right (Article 2(1)). The protection guaranteed under the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals still does not apply to the non-Ukrainian children of a Ukrainian national (or his/her spouse) who were not born in Poland.

The Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals may be understood as applying to the 'closest family' of Ukrainian nationals who have been granted the 'Pole's Card' (Article 1(1)), no dependency is required. However, the rules in this regard are so unclear that different interpretations, both including (e.g. Klaus 2022: 24, 28–29; Kołodziej 2022) and excluding (e.g. Golec *et al*. 2022) such family members from the scope of the

special temporary protection mechanism, are possible. Furthermore, even if the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals applies to this specific group of family members, it still does not apply to the dependent family members of Ukrainian nationals who have not been recognised as belonging to the Polish nation.

It may be argued that the omitted children and dependent family members are covered by the temporary protection mechanism established under the Protection Act. However, this would result in a situation where some children and family members of Ukrainian nationals are eligible for special temporary protection in Poland, while others have access only to the general temporary protection mechanism. Accordingly, their legal status and the scope of their rights would differ (possibly even within the same family, SIP 2023: 2). It may be incompatible with the Member State's obligation to treat persons enjoying temporary protection in accordance with international law prohibiting discrimination (Recital 16 in the preamble to the Temporary Protection Directive; see also Kerber 2002: 201; Prantl and Kysel 2022). Thus, it must be concluded that the omission of some family members in the scope of the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals is against Article 2(1)(c) in conjunction with Article 2(4)(b-c) of the Council Implementing Decision (see also Klaus 2022: 28-29; SIP 2022a: 1).

Two more limitations as regards persons enjoying special temporary protection in Poland have been introduced into the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals – both incompatible with the Council Implementing Decision, albeit one already repealed. First, the law in question initially required that only persons who entered Poland directly from Ukraine were eligible for temporary protection (Article 1(1) and (2)). Meanwhile, it has been declared within the EU that Ukrainian nationals can choose in which country they want to enjoy temporary protection (as confirmed by Recitals 15 and 16 in the preamble of the Council Implementing Decision; see also Carrera *et al.* 2022: 16, 28; ECRE 2023, 1; European Commission 2022a; Thym 2022; Vitiello 2022: 23–24; cf. Küçük 2022, arguing that free choice in this regard is limited). Accordingly, the 'direct entry' requirement was quickly repealed with a retroactive effect (Sadowski 2023: 349).[4] Second, the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals still requires an entry to Poland to be legal for the person concerned to be eligible for special temporary protection. The Council Implementing Decision does not mention such a requirement; thus, it should be revoked (SIP 2022a: 2). The one counterpoint may be, again, that irregular entrants can benefit from temporary protection under the Protection Act. However, nothing seems to justify the unequal treatment of Ukrainian nationals and their spouses enjoying temporary protection which depends on the legality of their entry to Poland.

Lastly, as expected (Grześkowiak 2019: 212), Poland did not extend the personal scope of temporary protection despite the encouragement to do so expressly provided for in Recital 14 in the preamble to the Council Implementing Decision (Klaus 2022: 30). While it is compatible with EU law, it is worrying that asylum-seekers, students and seasonal workers in Ukraine, as well as people who left Ukraine just before 24 February 2022, have all been excluded from the scope of this protection (Vitiello 2022; see also Carrera *et al.* 2022: 13; Klaus and Górczyńska 2022: 89–90).

Residence permits

Under the Temporary Protection Directive (Article 8), persons enjoying temporary protection shall be provided with residence permits for the entire duration of the temporary protection. A 'residence permit' is defined in Article 2(g) of the directive. Peers (2015: 578) rightly claimed that '(t)hese permits must take the form of the common EU residence permit'. Thus, they should be issued in accordance with the Council Regulation (EC) No 1030/2002 of 13 June 2002 laying down a uniform format for residence permits for third-country nationals.

Before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Polish law on temporary protection followed this guidance. Persons enjoying temporary protection were supposed to be given a residence card (*karta pobytu*) that

complied with the abovementioned uniform format. However, upon the introduction of the new law in March 2022, persons enjoying temporary protection are no longer given a uniform EU residence permit in Poland (see, critically, Białas and Jagura 2022: 4; Klaus 2022: 403).

Since March 2022, under the Act Protection (Article 110(5–9)), international protection beneficiaries in Ukraine, their family members and permanent residence holders in Ukraine may all request a certificate confirming that they enjoy temporary protection in Poland. It is issued free-of-charge and is valid as long as temporary protection remains in force.

Meanwhile, under the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals, no residence permits were initially offered to Ukrainian nationals and their family members (Klaus 2022: 36). For four months, they could only acquire written confirmation that they obtained a special personal identification number ('PESEL UKR', under Article 4). This number is given, on request, to all persons enjoying special temporary protection in Poland. Applying for a 'PESEL UKR' is not mandatory; however, access to some rights has been conditional on the acquisition of this number. Notwithstanding, the document confirming the obtention of a 'PESEL UKR' cannot be considered a residence permit within the meaning of Articles 2(g) and 8(1) of the Temporary Protection Directive (HFHR 2022: 4). It does not confirm the person's identity, does not state clearly that the person concerned is allowed to reside in Poland and was not notified to the European Commission as a 'residence permit'. Moreover, in practice, the Polish Border Guard quickly confirmed that persons enjoying special temporary protection in Poland did not hold a residence permit. Some Ukrainian nationals, who had fled after 24 February 2022 and had returned temporarily to Ukraine, then struggled to re-enter Poland, even though they enjoyed temporary protection there (PRAB 2023: 12; SIP 2022b). To re-enter, a valid visa, residence permit or a right to a visa-free travel was required by the Polish Border Guard. Having a 'PESEL UKR', even when confirmed in writing, was not always considered enough (Łysienia 2023: 24–25).

In July 2022, an electronic document – '*Diia.pl*' – was introduced. It entitles Ukrainian nationals and their family members – when holding a valid travel document[5] – to cross the Polish border and travel within the Schengen area for up to 90 days. It is available online for persons enjoying special temporary protection in Poland; however, not all children have been given access to '*Diia.pl*' (Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich 2023a). This is in contradiction with Article 8 of the Temporary Protection Directive that clearly obliges Member States to 'provide persons enjoying temporary protection with residence permits'. The 'persons' mentioned there must certainly include both adults and children. This interpretation is confirmed by the inclusion of minors in the definition of 'family members' provided for in Article 2(4)(b) of the Council Implementing Decision. Moreover, the lack of a residence permit for children actually deprives their parents of their right to free movement within the EU (unless they decide to leave their children behind). Meanwhile, the Council Implementing Decision clearly confirms that persons enjoying temporary protection have 'the right to travel within the Union for 90 days within a 180-day period' (Recital 16). This right has, in practice, been illusory for some Ukrainian parents enjoying temporary protection in Poland. Only in March 2023 was the law changed to solve the problem of children's limited access to '*Diia.pl*'.[6] However, it remains to be seen how effective the solution provided for in Article 10(1a-1d) of the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals will be in practice.

Both the '*Diia.pl*' and the certificate issued under the Protection Act were notified to the European Commission as 'residence permits' mentioned in Article 2(g) of the Temporary Protection Directive. They are, however, not the uniform EU residence permits referred to in Article 2(16)(a) of the Schengen Borders Code[7] (European Commission 2022b). Thus, these documents are considered to constitute residence permits under one EU act but not under the other. This is not only counterintuitive but also departs from earlier Polish practice. International protection beneficiaries are granted uniform EU residence permits in Poland (Article 89i (1-2a) of the Protection Act), as required under Article 24 of the Qualification Directive.[8] A 'residence

permit' definition in this directive (Article 2(m)) is the same as that provided for in the Temporary Protection Directive (Article 2(g)). Hence, persons enjoying temporary protection in Poland should be given the uniform EU residence permit so as recognised refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries.

Accommodation

Under Article 13(1) of the Temporary Protection Directive, persons enjoying temporary protection must be provided with 'suitable accommodation' or, if necessary, with 'the means to obtain housing'. Under Article 13(3) of the directive, the level of aid may be adjusted according to the ability of an employed or self-employed person to meet his/her own needs. Persons enjoying both kinds of temporary protection in Poland have some access to accommodation. However, this access is not provided in accordance with the directive.

Until January 2023, Article 12(17) of the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals determined that accommodation for special temporary protection beneficiaries was provided by the regional authorities (*Wojewoda*) for a period of no less than two months (counted from the day of the first entry to Poland) as far as funds allow. The same limitations have been introduced into the Protection Act (Article 112(1a)). Both provisions were formulated ambiguously, although it seems that they were aimed at creating the possibility for domestic authorities to limit access to accommodation to only two months depending on the availability of public funds. Such limitations are not allowed under the Temporary Protection Directive (Klaus 2022: 85, 404–405; SIP 2022a: 8). This conclusion is supported by three arguments. One is that, under Article 13(3) of the directive, the level of aid may be adjusted according to the ability of an employed or self-employed person to meet his/her own needs. This is the only modification as regards the level of aid allowed under Article 13. It has been implemented in the Protection Act (Article 112(4-4f)) but not introduced into the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals. The possibility of limiting the level or duration of aid depending on the financial capacity of the state was not provided for in the directive. The second argument is that, under the directive, it is clear that persons enjoying temporary protection who cannot meet their own needs must have access to accommodation throughout the duration of this protection. Hence, the limitation of accommodation to two months depending on the availability of public funds provided for in Polish law conflicted with the Temporary Protection Directive. The third argument concerns the Polish authorities' discretion in providing housing to special temporary protection beneficiaries. The temporal limitation as regards the provision of accommodation mentioned above could not be remedied by the fact that the regional authorities could provide housing for Ukrainian nationals beyond the 2-month period. The optional character of Article 12(1) of the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals (Płonka-Bielenin 2022) constituted an insufficient safeguard from the standpoint of the Temporary Protection Directive (Klaus 2022: 36; SIP 2022a: 8).

In January 2023, the abovementioned rules were changed significantly (Article 12 (17-17f) of the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals).[9] The Polish authorities were given a full discretion with regards to accommodation for special temporary protection beneficiaries. They are not obliged by domestic law to provide such an assistance at any time; the 2-month obligation has been repealed. If these authorities do offer accommodation, it is provided free-of-charge for a maximum period of 120 days, after which, since March 2023, special temporary protection beneficiaries must, as a rule, contribute to the cost of their living in housing organised by the Polish authorities. Only vulnerable persons and those in a difficult personal situation do not have to pay for their stay over and above these 120 days in the accommodation centres. Thus, on the one hand, upon the amendment of January 2023, the Polish authorities have even more discretion as regards accommodation than before, so the law in question is now even more incompatible with the Temporary Protection Directive. On the other hand, the co-payment obligation can be in accordance with the EU law (cf. Jarosz and Klaus 2023: 27; SIP 2023: 5) but only if it is interpreted with Article 13(3) of the directive in

mind. However, the Polish law does not directly state that the obligation to participate in the costs of living depends on the ability of an employed or self-employed person to meet his/her own needs. The exceptional rule concerning 'persons in a difficult personal situation' seems to enable national authorities to apply the law in question in accordance with Article 13(3) of the Temporary Protection Directive but it is at present uncertain how this rule will be interpreted in practice.

The abovementioned incompatibility with EU law has not been removed by the availability of a financial allowance for private persons and companies providing accommodation and food to Ukrainian nationals and their family members (under Article 13 of the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals, see SIP 2022a: 8). First, this allowance is paid in principle only for 120 days (while temporary protection lasts one year or more). Second, it is not paid if the aid is limited to accommodation (the provision of food is also required). Lastly, it is not paid to persons enjoying temporary protection but on the request of persons or companies accommodating and feeding them. For these reasons, this financial allowance cannot be treated as a 'means to obtain housing' within the meaning of Article 13(1) of the directive.

Family reunification

Article 15 of the Temporary Protection Directive affords persons enjoying temporary protection a limited right to family reunification (cf. Kerber 2002: 204). Articles 117–117b of the Protection Act mirror the rules provided for in Article 15 of the directive to some extent (although the 'best interests of the child' guarantee is not explicitly mentioned – see also Noll and Gunneflo 2007: 44). Thus, in principle, international protection beneficiaries and permanent residence holders in Ukraine are entitled to reunite with their spouses and children remaining outside Poland as well as with other dependent family members (Chlebny 2022: 151). However, procedural rules in this respect are lacking, possibly making the right to family reunification illusory (Łysienia 2023: 23; SIP 2023: 6).

Meanwhile, the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals do not provide – in any way – for the right to family reunification (Białas and Jagura 2022: 7; Sąd Najwyższy 2022; SIP 2022a: 11). Moreover, it explicitly states that the rules on temporary protection covered in the Protection Act, including those specified in Articles 117-117b, are not applicable to persons enjoying special temporary protection (Article 2(8)). Hence, Ukrainian nationals enjoying temporary protection in Poland have no right to be reunited with any of their family members (both when those family members are still in Ukraine and when in another Member State). This is clearly incompatible with Article 15 of the directive.

Return and measures after temporary protection has ended

The Temporary Protection Directive states, in Article 20, that 'when the temporary protection ends, the general laws on protection and on aliens in the Member States shall apply, without prejudice to Articles 21, 22 and 23'. Article 21 concerns voluntary returns, Article 22 – enforced returns and Article 23 – residence conditions for sick people and families with minor children attending school. In the literature, it has been highlighted that the possibility to return voluntarily must exist irrespective of whether or not temporary protection has ended (Peers 2015: 592).

The Protection Act affords international protection beneficiaries and permanent residence holders in Ukraine some support concerning voluntary return but only when temporary protection ends. Article 118(1) of the Protection Act states that, upon the end of temporary protection, the Head of the Office for Foreigners (*Szef Urzędu do Spraw Cudzoziemców*) takes the measures needed to enable the return of persons who enjoyed this protection. Moreover, a TCN must be informed about all circumstances that can be of significance when

he or she makes a decision about the return (para. 2). Despite the fact that the voluntary nature of a return has not been explicitly mentioned there, Articles 118(1) and (2) should be understood as implementing Article 21(1) of the Temporary Protection Directive. However, it is only a partial implementation (SIP 2023: 4). First, Article 118(1) of the Protection Act does not refer to 'respect for human dignity', while Article 21(1) of the directive states that the 'Member States shall ensure that the provisions governing the voluntary return of persons enjoying temporary protection facilitate their return with respect for human dignity'. Noll and Gunneflo (2007: 17, 53) saw this omission as an infringement of Article 21(1) of the directive. Second, Article 118(1) omits guarantees concerning the voluntary return of persons who still enjoy temporary protection. Third, the measures needed to enable return, mentioned in this provision, are not specified. Thus, it is unknown what assistance in this regard is to be provided in practice when temporary protection ends. Moreover, Article 21(2) of the directive, ensuring the 'favourable consideration to requests for return to the host Member State from persons who have enjoyed temporary protection and exercised their right to a voluntary return' has not been implemented at all (Noll and Gunneflo 2007: 55).

While Article 22 of the Temporary Protection Directive has not been explicitly transposed into the text of the Protection Act, the Act on Foreigners of 12 December 2013[10] (hereinafter, the Foreigners Act) – regulating in general enforced returns and humanitarian stays – applies to persons who enjoyed temporary protection. These rules seem to satisfy the minimum standard established in Article 22 of the directive.

In compliance with Article 23(1) of the directive, the Protection Act offers the possibility to grant a temporary residence permit to persons who enjoyed temporary protection but who cannot return to their country of origin due to their medical condition (Article 118(3)). Nevertheless, Poland did not choose to implement the optional rules concerning the extended stay of families with minor children who attend schools (Article 23(2) of the directive).

Meanwhile, the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals is silent about returns, both voluntary and enforced. While it may be again concluded that the enforced returns are regulated in the Foreigners Act, it is particularly worrying that no guarantees regarding voluntary return have been offered to Ukrainian nationals and their family members who enjoy special temporary protection in Poland. This is obviously in contradiction to Article 21 of the directive (SIP 2023: 4) and has already proved to be very troublesome in practice.

Some Ukrainian nationals and their family members enjoying special temporary protection did return voluntarily to Ukraine and afterwards decided to re-enter Poland. Under Article 21(2) of the directive, requests for the re-entry of persons who enjoyed temporary protection and exercised their right to voluntary return should be considered 'advantageously, taking into account the factors referred to in the Directive' (Peers 2015: 593). Despite this, it has been reported that special temporary protection beneficiaries who returned temporarily to Ukraine were, in practice, denied re-entry to Poland. The reasons for these refusals of entry changed over time but the respective decisions were mainly justified by the lack of a visa or residence permit or because the persons concerned exceeded the 90-day period for visa-free movement in the EU (Łysienia 2023: 8–9, 24–26). Initially, as explained above, re-entry might have been denied due to the unavailability of a residence permit for special temporary protection beneficiaries. This problem was partly solved by the introduction of the '*Diia.pl*' in July 2022. However, another controversial rule has remained in force since the adoption of the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals. Under Article 11(2), persons enjoying special temporary protection who left Poland for more than 30 days lose their special temporary protection status (and '*Diia.pl*'). This rule is seen as being 'at odds' with the spirit of the Temporary Protection Directive (ECRE 2023: 2). Moreover, some special temporary protection beneficiaries who left Poland for less than 30 days reportedly also lost their status (which is against Polish law; Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich 2023b). In practice, people whose status was withdrawn sometimes struggled to re-enter Poland. Statistical information provided by the Polish Border Guard confirms that numerous Ukrainian nationals had been denied entry to Poland

despite the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine (Komenda Główna Straży Granicznej 2023: 5–6, see also PRAB 2023: 12; Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich 2022; SIP 2023: 3–4). The observed practice of the Border Guard here is quite far from the minimum standard of the 'favourable consideration to requests for return to the host Member State' given 'on the basis of the circumstances prevailing in the country of origin' mentioned in Article 21(2) of the directive (SIP 2023: 4).

Remedies

Under Article 29 of the Temporary Protection Directive, '(p)ersons who have been excluded from the benefit of temporary protection or family reunification by a Member State shall be entitled to mount a legal challenge in the Member State concerned'. Despite its peculiar wording (Carrera *et al.* 2022: 15), this procedural guarantee concerns appeals against decisions issued under Article 28 of the directive (an exclusion from protection on grounds related to national security and public order) and decisions to refuse to reunite a family under Article 15 of the directive. In fact, Article 29 provides for the only procedural rule concerning family reunification that was inscribed into the directive (Peers 2015: 584). Moreover, as many commentators rightly indicate (Kerber 2002: 213; Noll and Gunneflo 2007: 23, 68; Peers 2015: 596–597; Skordas 2022: 1225), Article 29 of the directive must apply also to any other refusal to recognise that a person enjoys temporary protection. Only this interpretation guarantees that a right to an effective remedy, provided for in Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, is sufficiently respected.

In Poland, the right to an effective remedy has been secured concerning refusals of temporary protection on the grounds related to national security and public order. On the one hand, under Article 109 of the Protection Act, international protection beneficiaries in Ukraine, their family members and permanent residence holders in Ukraine may be denied temporary protection in Poland for the same reasons as those mentioned in Article 28 of the Temporary Protection Directive (Noll and Gunneflo 2007: 65). The refusal decision is final within the meaning of the Polish administrative law, which means that there is no right to challenge it before the second-instance administrative authority. However, it can be appealed through the courts, first the Provincial Administrative Court in Warsaw (*Wojewódzki Sąd Administracyjny w Warszawie*), then to the Supreme Administrative Court (*Naczelny Sąd Administracyjny*) (Białas and Jagura 2022: 6; Klaus 2022: 401). While the number of levels of decision-making has been limited in comparison with the regular administrative procedure in Poland (where one administrative appeal level is offered, followed by two levels of a judicial decision), this is in compliance with the right to an effective remedy (Łysienia 2022: 457–459). On the other hand, the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals does not provide for the possibility to exclude from special temporary protection any persons who committed crimes or are considered to pose a threat to national security. Article 28 of the Temporary Protection Directive has not been implemented regarding Ukrainian nationals and their family members fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

In contrast, persons enjoying temporary protection in Poland have no right to a remedy when they are denied family reunification. Under the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals, there is no right to family reunification at all. Under the Protection Act, the right to family reunification has been regulated; however, no procedure has yet been established. Admittedly, some technicalities – important for cooperation between the Member States as regards family reunification – have been specified but there is no mention of how to apply for reunification, how it is decided or how to challenge a reunification denial. Thus, it must be concluded that international protection beneficiaries and permanent residence holders in Ukraine have no explicit right to an effective remedy concerning decisions to refuse them family reunification (Noll and Gunneflo 2007: 68).

A refusal to recognise the person concerned as someone enjoying special temporary protection in Poland has been overlooked in Polish law. No clear procedure has been established in this regard. In practice, persons

who have been refused access to special temporary protection have been just sent away from the respective authorities without any proper decision in this regard being issued (Białas and Jagura 2022: 6; SIP 2023: 3). The Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals specifies only that a person can be denied a 'PESEL UKR' if he or she attached an incorrect photo, if no fingerprints has been taken or if an identity document has not been disclosed by the applicant. Even then, the right to appeal has been explicitly excluded (Article 4(16-17) of the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals). It is uncertain whether a judicial remedy will be available in these circumstances (Klaus 2022: 53; cf. Białas and Jagula 2022: 6). The law in question is silent about the right to appeal when the person concerned is denied a 'PESEL UKR' due to the lack of recognition of his/her temporary protection status. Hypothetically, it may be argued that this non-recognition could be challenged before the administrative courts as the 'other public act or activity'. However, this legal pathway is uncertain and has not been reported to be used in practice. Thus, Ukrainian nationals and some of their family members who are denied recognition as persons enjoying temporary protection in Poland may actually have no right 'to mount a legal challenge' in such circumstances.

The Protection Act does not provide those who were denied access to general temporary protection with any means of appeal. However, under Article 219 of the Code on the Administrative Procedure, there is the possibility to appeal against a decision refusing the issuance of a certificate confirming that the person concerned enjoys general temporary protection in Poland; thus, some remedial pathway does exist in this regard (Łysienia 2023: 12).

Conclusions and final remarks

In this article, the question of whether Poland follows the EU law on temporary protection in its response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been answered. In particular, the article aimed to identify the most pronounced divergences from the Temporary Protection Directive and the Council Implementing Decision that occurred in the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals and the Protection Act up until the end of March 2023.

It has been shown that the Polish law on temporary protection does not fully follow the Temporary Protection Directive and the Council Implementing Decision. Despite many amendments of the respective national laws, the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals and the Protection Act are still not compatible with EU law. The discordance with the Temporary Protection Directive and the Council Implementing Decision was identified in the following areas: eligibility, residence permits, accommodation, family reunification, returns and measures after temporary protection ends, as well as remedies. The observed inconsistencies may be summarised as follows.

First, not all those mentioned in Article 2 of the Council Implementing Decision have been offered temporary protection under the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals. The non-Ukrainian children and dependent family members of Ukrainian nationals, as well as Ukrainian nationals and their spouses who entered Poland in an irregular manner, are excluded from the scope of this act. Moreover, unlike Ukrainian nationals, international protection beneficiaries in Ukraine and their family members cannot benefit from the special temporary protection mechanism.

Second, under the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals, initially no residence permit was offered to Ukrainian nationals and their spouses, which goes against Article 8(1) of the Temporary Protection Directive. This changed only in July 2022, when they were given an electronic document, the '*Diia.pl*'. However, it is not a residence permit as referred to in Article 2(16)(a) of the Schengen Borders Code. Moreover, not all special temporary protection beneficiaries have access to this residence permit.

Third, access to accommodation for persons enjoying temporary protection in Poland is not provided in accordance with Article 13(1) of the Temporary Protection Directive. At first, it was conditional upon the availability of public funds and could have been limited to two months. Those limitations were incompatible with the Temporary Protection Directive. Since the amendment of January 2023, there is no legal obligation to provide special temporary protection beneficiaries with accommodation; the Polish authorities have full discretion here. Moreover, after 120 days, the person concerned should, with some exceptions, participate in the cost of living in the accommodation organised by the Polish authorities. Depending on the interpretation of these exceptions in practice, the co-payment obligation may be compatible or incompatible with EU law.

Fourth, there are no rules concerning family reunification provided for in the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals. Thus, Ukrainian nationals enjoying temporary protection in Poland cannot reunite with their family members, in clear violation of Article 15 of the directive. On the other hand, the right to family reunification is regulated in the Protection Act, but the procedural rules are lacking, possibly making family reunification illusory in practice.

Fifth, no rules concerning voluntary returns can be found in the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals which disrespects Article 21 of the directive. While this provision has been implemented to the Protection Act, it is only a partial implementation. In particular, the respective Polish law omits guarantees concerning the voluntary return of persons who still enjoy temporary protection, nor does it transpose the rules as regards the favourable consideration of requests to re-enter the Member State upon a voluntary return to Ukraine.

Lastly, Polish law offers no right to appeal against a refusal to be reunited with a family member, in breach of Article 29 of the directive. Moreover, the law is unclear concerning access to an effective remedy when a person is considered by the respective authorities to not be eligible for special temporary protection.

Taking into consideration these divergences, one could easily get the impression that the Polish legislators lost sight of EU law when the temporary protection mechanisms were being designed in February and March 2022. The governmental proposal for the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals (Rada Ministrów 2022) briefly states that this act is in compliance with EU law but does not mention the Temporary Protection Directive and the Council Implementing Decision. Moreover, initially, it did not regulate the relation between the rules concerning temporary protection provided for in the Protection Act and the solutions proposed in the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals. Article 2(6-8) of the latter act (stating that persons covered by this law are enjoying temporary protection but the Protection Act does not apply to them) was added later on during the legislative proceedings. This addition was arguably aimed at responding to the numerous comments that the relation between the proposed law and the EU law was uncertain (e.g. Konfederacja Lewiatan 2022: 2).

The Polish system, where the two temporary protection mechanisms are available, is overly complicated (Klaus 2022: 28) and lacks clarity and consistency. On the contrary, it was argued that the introduction of the special temporary protection mechanism was needed to provide Ukrainian nationals with greater protection than given by the minimum standards arising from the Temporary Protection Directive. Indeed, the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Nationals may be seen as constituting more favourable and humane conditions for Ukrainian nationals and their family members (Golec *et al.* 2022; Grzelak-Bach 2022). In some areas, the latter act offers generous rights that are more advantageous than the ones provided for in EU law. However, it cannot be overlooked that, in the areas scrutinised in this article, the Polish law on special temporary protection does not meet the minimum standards guaranteed in the Temporary Protection Directive. This defectiveness undermines Poland’s efforts to provide Ukrainian nationals with a greater scope of protection.

The incompatibility between Polish and EU law identified in this article may, for example, simply result from the speed with which the new law was adopted. Since 24 February 2022, Poland has been challenged by the enormous influx of persons fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Thus, in March 2022, it might have been more important to quickly regulate their stay in Poland than to scrutinise the respective EU law. This may

be even more true if we take into account that the wording of the Temporary Protection Directive is not always clear and up-to-date (Carrera *et al.* 2022: 15–16; Gluns and Wessels 2017: 75, 82) and the comprehensive guidance regarding its scope is lacking. However, the reasons may also be different. Beirens *et al.* (2016: 25) noticed that the generous level of rights offered by the Temporary Protection Directive (cf. Küçük 2023: 16) might have been a motive hidden behind the continuing reluctance of the Member States to activate the directive. Ineli-Ciger (2018: 161) also counted it as the reason for the non-activation. However, in 2022, she did not uphold this opinion (Ineli-Ciger 2022). Notwithstanding, the analysis conducted for this article may suggest that some Member States – even though they agreed to activate the directive in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine – still consider the level of rights offered to persons enjoying temporary protection to be too high. As a result, they may be trying to limit their obligations arising from the Temporary Protection Directive by adopting national laws that only partially or seemingly follow the respective EU law.

The Temporary Protection Directive was adopted to harmonise Member States' responses to the mass influx of displaced persons. Its prompt activation in reaction to the Russian invasion of Ukraine was indeed 'a much-welcomed step' (Carrera *et al.* 2022: 1). The directive is now applied in the Member States for the first time in its more than 20-year history. How it is implemented is crucial as it will shape the EU temporary protection (or similar) mechanism for years to come. Its implementation is even more important in Member States like Poland where great numbers of persons fleeing Ukraine found shelter. While, indeed, the situation in Member States due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent large-scale influx of displaced persons continues to be 'highly challenging' (European Commission 2022a), this fact cannot be used as an excuse for the continuing non- or incorrect implementation of the EU law on temporary protection. More than a year after the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, national laws on temporary protection must finally be made to comply with EU law. It is of great importance concerning that the Temporary Protection Directive's revocation and replacement are being now discussed in the EU.[11]

Notes

1. *Ustawa z dnia 12 marca 2022 r. o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa* (Journal of Laws 2022 item 583).
2. *Ustawa z dnia 13 czerwca 2003 r. o udzielaniu cudzoziemcom ochrony na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Journal of Laws 2003 no. 128 item 1176).
3. See, e.g., the Polish translation of Article 13(1) of the Temporary Protection Directive.
4. *Ustawa z dnia 23 marca 2022 r. o zmianie ustawy o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa oraz ustawy – Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym i nauce* (Journal of Laws 2022 item 682).
5. The Temporary Protection Directive does not provide for the issuance of travel documents (Peers 2015: 585).
6. *Ustawa z dnia 9 marca 2023 r. o zmianie ustawy o cudzoziemcach oraz niektórych innych ustaw* (Journal of Laws 2023 item 547).
7. Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code) (codification) (OJ L 77/1).
8. Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted (recast) (OJ L 337/9).

9. *Ustawa z dnia 13 stycznia 2023 r. o zmianie ustawy o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa oraz niektórych innych ustaw* (Journal of Laws 2023 item 185).
10. *Ustawa z dnia 12 grudnia 2013 r. o cudzoziemcach* (Journal of Laws 2013 item 1650).
11. Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council addressing situations of crisis and *force majeure* in the fields of migration and asylum; COM(2020) 613 final.

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— ARTICLES —

'Mixing Different Traditions and Picking What's Best': Characteristics and Migration Experiences of Polish High-Tech Professionals in Silicon Valley

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Growing demand for a highly skilled workforce in a knowledge- and technology-based economy stimulates the recruitment of international professionals, resulting in their increased participation in the total volume of international migrants. However, little scholarly attention has been paid to their integration strategies and migration trajectories. Drawing on 46 interviews with Polish high-tech professionals, this article explores their characteristics and migration experiences in Silicon Valley. Grounded theory, a biographical method, a transnational approach and the concept of social anchoring guided my data collection, analysis and interpretation. The study results indicated that high-tech professionals were well prepared for immigration to the United States and were able to integrate effectively into the multicultural environment of Silicon Valley by adopting the rules of the host society 'only as much as necessary' without rejecting their previous cultural affiliations. Working at the level of competence and professional experience from the moment of arriving in the United States facilitated their structural adaptation to American society. The study contributes to the existing body of literature in migration research by offering a nuanced insight into motivations, identities and values of modern highly skilled migrants and providing new ways of understanding their decision-making processes on migration and settlement.

Keywords: migration of the highly skilled, high-tech professionals, Polish migrants in the United States, Silicon Valley, transnationalism

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Introduction

Migration is a permanent attribute of humanity (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014; Kubiak and Slany 1999; Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci and Pellegrino 1999). People leave their home countries to improve their living conditions, gain access to resources, pursue educational opportunities and ensure civil liberties and all kinds of freedom. Migration, however, driven by globalisation processes (Stiglitz 2002), has gained increased political salience in recent decades and has never had such a significant socio-economic and political impact as it does today (Castles *et al.* 2014). International migration has tripled since 1970, totalling some 272 million migrants in 2019 – about 3.5 per cent of the global population (International Organization for Migration/UN Migration Agency 2019).

The increasing participation of highly skilled international workers, also referred to in the literature as 'transnational professionals', 'international talent' or 'international experts' (D'Costa 2008; Koser and Salt 1997; Wagner 2011), has been a strong modern migration trend (Kaczmarczyk and Tyrowicz 2008). As of 2010, there were at least 28 million highly skilled international migrants – an increase of 130 per cent compared to 1990 (Kerr, Kerr, Özden and Parsons 2016). Although highly skilled workers constitute only a fraction of the total volume of international migrants, their skills are indispensable for today's modern knowledge- and technology-based economy and are in rising demand (Koser and Salt 1997; Salt 1997). Therefore, there has been considerable competition between countries in recent years – known as a 'global race for talent' (Czaika and Parsons 2016) – to recruit highly skilled workers. Wealthy countries offer the best living and working conditions, competitive salaries and other opportunities beyond financial incentives and are thus able to outcompete poorer countries (Solimano 2008). About 50 per cent of all foreign highly skilled workers settle in the United States, making it the leading host country for transnational professionals (Turner 2006).

Despite the growing participation and importance of highly skilled migrants, published data on their integration strategies and migration trajectories are still limited. Little scholarly attention has also been paid to the modern migration stream of highly educated Poles to the United States and their decision-making processes on migration and settlement. This article, drawing on a qualitative study comprising 46 interviews,[1] aims to help to close this knowledge gap by identifying and better understanding the characteristics and migration experiences of Polish high-tech professionals in Silicon Valley,[2] defined as those who 'obtained a higher education degree with a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent, migrated[3] to the United States and, at the time of the interview, worked in the high-tech industry'.[4] To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study to focus on the contemporary migration stream of highly educated Poles to this part of the United States. I seek to answer the following research questions:

- What factors contribute to becoming a transnational professional? (Q1)
- What are the educational and professional career paths of Polish high-tech professionals in Silicon Valley? (Q2)
- What are typical circumstances of and motivations for their migrating to the United States? (Q3)
- What is the process of adaptation to American society like for Polish high-tech professionals? (Q4)
- How do migration experiences influence their identity? (Q5)

The collection, analysis and interpretation of data were conducted with the guidance of grounded theory (Charmaz 2014; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Konecki 2000), a biographical methodology (Bednarz-Łuczewska and Łuczewski 2012; Szczepański 1973), a transnational approach (e.g. Babiński 2009; Erdal and Oeppen 2013; Faist, Fauser and Reisenauer 2013; Glick Schiller 2003, 2004; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992, 1995; Levitt 2009; Nowicka 2020; Opiłowska 2014; Ślusarczyk 2019; Waldinger 2013, 2015), the concept of social anchoring (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013a, 2013b, 2016) and the findings of other relevant

reports (e.g. Cekiera 2013, 2014; Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich 2006; Eich-Krohm 2007, 2012; Hardill 2002; Hatalska 2017; Latusek-Jurczak 2014; Ong, Cheng and Evans 1996; Oommen 1989; Raczyński 2019; Sosnowska 2016; Wagner 2011).

Theoretical background

Technology, globalisation and migration

Technological, economic, political and cultural changes in the world in recent decades, facilitated by globalisation, have transformed migration and settlement patterns (Glick Schiller *et al.* 1995). In the past, international migration meant the inevitable loosening of social and cultural ties with the country of origin. The current development of modern means of transport and the communication revolution have reduced the costs of travelling long distances and thus facilitate connections between migrants abroad and communities at home (Waldinger 2013: 764). Thanks to the advent of the internet, communication between migrants and stay-at-homes can be instantaneous (Waldinger 2015). Nowadays, migrants are less isolated and can maintain relations with their country of origin (through various communication channels, such as telephone calls, videoconferences, social media; in-person visits; family gatherings; involvement in immigration organisations or investments) with less effort while simultaneously integrating into a new society (Glick Schiller *et al.* 1995).

Research suggests that high-tech professionals, due to having competencies which are easily applicable outside the place of their education, English-language skills, knowledge of Western scientific methods, cultures and work style and the ability to use new technologies, may choose different adaptation strategies than migrants were able to do in the past (Ong *et al.* 1996; Wagner 2011). Scientific evidence shows that highly skilled migrants may not feel much pressure to assimilate (Babiński 2009; Faist *et al.* 2013; Glick Schiller *et al.* 1995), seem to integrate structurally into new societies faster than migrants in the past and to drift between two cultures, maintaining their identity from the place of origin and adapting 'only as much as necessary' (Babiński 2009).

The integration of high-tech professionals

Integration models explain how individuals adjust and adapt to the host society and its norms, values and social behaviours. An assimilation perspective on migration, which dominated the scientific discourse until the 1970s, showed the integration processes as unconscious and irreversible, resulting in a homogeneous society in which ethnic diversity disappears or becomes imperceptible among its members (Kubiak and Paluch 1980). This concept was not intended to explain new patterns of international migration and the integration strategies of migrants in the context of technological developments and progressing globalisation (Opiłowska 2014). It also ignored the fact that 'international migration means cross-border connection' (Waldinger 2013: 756) and actions of immigrants may be bi-directional and encompass not only the host society but also the country of origin and relatives who stayed there (Faist *et al.* 2013). Scholars suggest, therefore, that the international movements of high-tech professionals cannot be adequately analysed through the lens of the assimilation approach (Babiński 2009; Eich-Krohm 2012; Faist *et al.* 2013; Glick Schiller *et al.* 1995; Wagner 2011).

The transnational perspective on migration and the concept of social anchoring

The transnational perspective on migration, created in the 1990s in response to the limitations of the assimilation approach (Glick Schiller *et al.* 1995; Opiłowska 2014), has been proposed by some scholars to study the contemporary migratory movements of highly skilled workers (Babiński 2009; Faist *et al.* 2013; Glick Schiller *et al.* 1995; Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013b). It accentuates constant and ongoing cross-border connections (known as transnational social spaces) between different geopolitical areas that are created and maintained through social ties – repeated interactions between migrants and non-migrants from the countries of residence and origin – such as visits to the family abroad or video conferences on professional matters with a co-worker living in another part of the world (Faist *et al*. 2013). For transnational social spaces to thrive, migrants must have the ability and readiness to enter two (or more) sociocultural environments and embrace a transformation of their identity, nationality and citizenship (Ślusarczyk 2019).

Transnationalism, when defined as 'an outcome of multiple belonging, practice and dispositions coming together, (…) allows addressing the aspirations of migrants and their attitudes, and apparent paradoxes in their behaviour" (Nowicka 2020: 1–2). The transitional perspective highlights that migrants are simultaneously exposed to different social, economic, political or cultural systems (Glick Schiller 2003) and that their lives are shaped by diverse and sometimes conflicting values, norms and ideas (Levitt 2009). As a result of being 'here and there' (in the host and the home country) at the same time (Waldinger 2015), migrants may feel that they have two homes and acquired a bicultural identity (Babiński 2009) or, on the contrary, they may feel lost and with no home at all (Waldinger 2015). Hence, as Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004: p. 1011) explain it, transnationalism's salient quality involves 'simultaneity', with 'movement and attachment' to home and host countries 'rotating back and forth and changing direction over time', just as 'persons change or swing one way or the other, depending on the context'.

The concept of social anchoring draws from the transnational tradition and complements it by connecting the issues of identity, adaptation and integration. It describes migration as a profound change that facilitates a need to establish identity, psychosocial stability and security in the host country that migrants achieve by 'establishing anchors' (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013a, 2013b, 2016). This echoes research studies indicating that transnational practices help to maintain the balance and meet migrants' needs on their road to adaptation (Erdal and Oeppen 2013; Morawska 2003; Pustułka and Ślusarczyk 2016). Modern migrants, however, tend *not* to make the final decision about where they will settle permanently and prefer to remain open to new opportunities, including further migration. Therefore, they are ready to 'un-anchor' at any time and change their residence, citizenship or surname (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013b).

Babiński (2009) calls highly skilled Poles migrating nowadays to the United States 'transnationals' and argues that, although they integrate structurally much faster than their counterparts did in the past, culturally they seem to maintain their Polish identity and ties with relatives from Poland much longer. Since Polish high-tech professionals in Silicon Valley fall into Babiński's definition of highly skilled migrants, the transnational approach has been chosen to study their characteristics and migration experiences, and particularly to learn about their motivations, aspirations, integration strategies and identity challenges. The concept of social anchoring adds value in helping to explain the migration decision-making process and in providing more context in which why and how migrants adapt to the new rules of the host society can be understood.

Methods

Study setting: The Polish community in Silicon Valley

The Polish diaspora in Silicon Valley and the neighbouring counties consists of about 75,000 members (60,000 in the counties of Santa Clara, San Mateo, Alameda and Santa Cruz and 14,500 in San Francisco County), of whom almost 90 per cent (67,000) were born in the United States (United States Census Bureau 2015). It is a diverse community comprising several clusters of migrants, vastly differing from each other in terms of their migration circumstances and motivations, adaptation pace, strategies and attitudes towards the country of origin. The Polish community in Silicon Valley encompasses (1) immigrants from the pre-transformation period; (2) people of Polish origin – immigrants in subsequent generations; (3) professionals; (4) entrepreneurs; (5) representatives of Polish companies; (6) students and apprentices; and (7) illegal immigrants (Latusek-Jurczak 2014). This article focuses primarily on professionals who predominately work for international corporations. However, some participants were entrepreneurs or considered developing their own businesses.

Poles in Silicon Valley, unlike some other diasporas (Gold 2018; Pellow and Park 2002; Wong 2005), do not form a coherent and integrated ethnic group due to their relatively small number, territorial dispersion and the lack of Polish institutions that could effectively integrate the Polish community (Latusek-Jurczak 2014). Most Polish organisations in the region operate beyond the boundaries of Silicon Valley (in San Francisco and the eastern part of the San Francisco Bay Area, where many Polish migrants settled before 1989). Silicon Valley hosts only one traditional ethnic institution (the Polish Roman Catholic parish in San Jose). Moreover, there are several informal groups focused on meeting the informational, social and entertainment needs of individuals rather than on integrating the Polish ethnic group as a whole, and several business-oriented organisations aimed to strengthen business cooperation between people of Polish origin and to support Polish entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. Organisations run by and for the Polish ethnic group in Silicon Valley have no political goals.

Sample

Since the Polish community in Silicon Valley is small and dispersed, I used a purposeful snowball sampling strategy (Patton 2014) to recruit my participants – a suitable method when members of migrant communities being studied are difficult to reach (Babbie 2020). I also targeted participants from several independent sources to diversify the study sample and ensure that it was not limited to one particular social group or employees of the same company (Rapley 2011). I recruited professionals at meetings (formal and informal) organised for the Polish community in Silicon Valley, via social media and at the Polish Roman Catholic parish in San Jose. The criteria for inclusion were (1) to live in the area (place of residence in Silicon Valley), (2) have arrived in the United States after 1989,[5] (3) to work in the high-technology industry and (4) to have a higher-education degree in the field of high technology or experience in the industry. Additionally, to learn more about the living conditions of the group, I interviewed several 'social experts' (members of the local Polish community with extensive knowledge about the community or Silicon Valley). The process of selecting expert interviewees was guided by my study objectives, recommendations and my knowledge and expertise.

Interviews

I conducted 40 semi-structured interviews with Polish high-tech professionals in Silicon Valley between April 2014 and March 2017 aiming to understand their migration experiences and career trajectories, learn how they

integrated into the host society and identify their characteristics. Additionally, I conducted 6 in-depth interviews with social experts between July 2017 and March 2018 to validate my findings. The interviews explored the following aspects of participants' biographies: (1) their education choices and professional career; (2) the circumstances and motivations of their migration to the United States; (3) their integration into American society; (4) the impact of migration experiences on participants' identity and approach to life and their decision-making processes regarding career and personal life.

Interviews that lasted about 60–90 minutes were conducted in person in locations chosen by the participants (primarily in their workplaces, homes or cafés/restaurants), audio-recorded and then transcribed *verbatim* (with all personally identifying information removed from the transcripts). Informal post-interview conversations with the recorder turned off, which often lasted for hours, allowed me to gain participants' trust and learn nuances that later facilitated the analysis, interpretation and contextualisation of the data.

The ethical conduct of the study was ensured by the voluntary participation of the respondents, following informed-consent rules, respecting the confidentiality and privacy of the participants, protecting my research data, acknowledging the multiple roles of the author, accurately reporting results and acknowledging other publications where, *inter alia*, the study results have been presented. No formal ethical review process was required at the institution where the study was conducted.

Analysis

I conducted a rigorous thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) based on the directions of the biographical method (Bednarz-Łuczewska and Łuczewski 2012; Szczepański 1973) and grounded theory (Charmaz 2014; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Konecki 2000). I performed two cycles of coding, including open coding (breaking data into discrete codes), axial coding (creating more abstract categories encompassing several different codes) and selective coding (connecting all categories around one core category). The final version of an inductively developed codebook contained 45 codes. Concurrently with coding, I created concept maps and theoretical notes for specific transcripts, codes and categories, following the recommendations of the grounded-theory method of qualitative analysis (Charmaz 2014; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Konecki 2012). For the analysis and interpretation, as instructed by Jan Szczepański (1973), I applied the following methods: typological (identifying types and patterns), constructive (using biographical material as a primary source of information) and exemplification (supporting the conclusions with quotes from research participants). In addition, by contextualising the results of this research through the lens of the transnational perspective, the concept of social anchoring and findings from numerous relevant studies, I made inductive reasoning intersubjectively verifiable.

I established the trustworthiness of the study through (1) sustained, prolonged engagement with the data; (2) the triangulation of sources (including interviews with professionals and social experts and an extensive literature review), research methods/techniques (grounded theory, biographical method) and theories (transnational theory, the concept of social anchoring); (3) peer debriefings throughout the process; (4) thick descriptions of context and (5) the search for disconfirming evidence, among other techniques (Denzin 2006; Grabowska-Lusińska 2012; Nowell, Norris, White and Moules 2017; Patton 2014).

Positionality statement

During the conduct of this research, I identified myself as a Polish immigrant (and the spouse of a high-tech professional) living in the United States (and, more specifically, in Silicon Valley). Over the years, however, with my legal status changing (from a temporary visa-holder to a permanent resident to an American citizen)

and experiences accumulating, my identity has also undergone a transformation. Nevertheless, I studied the community of which I felt that I was a member. My dual role – an expert and an insider – generated challenges (such as objectivity); yet, I believe the project would not have succeeded were it not for my residence in Silicon Valley and my knowledge of and access to members of the local Polish community that would be an arduous task for an outsider. I physically attended in-person meetings organised by and for the Polish community, where I reached many high-tech professionals and met people who later introduced me to prospective study participants. As an immigrant, I experienced many of the situations described by my respondents and could relate to and understand their dilemmas of living at the intersection of two cultures as well as their legal, adaptation or identity challenges. This helped me to bring my participants' perspectives to my data analysis and interpretation. As a social scientist, on the other hand, I was equipped with the tools to translate participants' stories into the language of science.

Findings

Participant demographic characteristics

A total of 41 Polish high-tech professionals participated in interviews,[6] 30 of whom were married, and 33 of whom were men, which reflected the over-representation of males in technical professions in Silicon Valley. The participants were relatively young, with an average age of 35.3 years.

All my participants had graduated from higher-education institutions with at least a Bachelor's degree (as per the adopted definition of a professional), with 39 graduating from Polish institutions and 8 from institutions abroad. Many had studied at world-renowned universities such as Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Cambridge University. Most of them had an educational background in information technology. Of the interviewees, 25 had studied computer science, software engineering or a similar field. Of the remaining participants, 5 graduated with a degree in other areas of applied science (electrical engineering, telecommunications, computer physics, mechanics and materials engineering or robotics), 4 studied life sciences (biotechnology, chemistry or biomedical engineering), 4 graduated with a degree in management or marketing and 3 studied social sciences (psychology or applied economics). Furthermore, 7 respondents obtained additional degrees or completed professional development postgraduate courses – such as a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) – or human resources, management, technical or language courses.

Most interviewees were employed in international corporations that recruit foreigners on a large scale, such as Apple, Cisco, Ericsson, Facebook, Google, Intel or Nokia. Several of them worked in start-ups, smaller companies or educational institutions. The study cohort encompassed a broad representation of professions, among which the dominant roles were (senior) software developer, (senior) software engineer, project manager, product manager and programme manager.

As my study focuses on the contemporary migration stream from Poland, the participants' length of stay in the United States was relatively short, with an average of 5.7 years, a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 26 years. Nearly all (36) interviewees held temporary visas upon entry to the United States, with 30 of them holding either L1B or H1B visas (the two most common work visas for professionals). Over time, the legal status of many respondents changed. At the time of the interview, 8 had applied for permanent residency ('Green Card') and were awaiting a decision; 11 were already permanent residents and 8 were American citizens. Table 1 summarises the interviewees' demographic information.

Table 1. Participant demographics characteristics

Variable	N
Age *(in years)*	**40**
Min-Max = 27–49	
Mean (SD) = 35.3 (6.0)	
27–30	11
31–35	12
36–40	9
41–45	6
46–49	2
Gender	**41**
Male	33
Female	8
Marital status	**41**
Married	30
Single	11
Type of higher education*	**40**
Polytechnic in Poland	26
University in Poland	7
Other higher education institution in Poland	6
Higher education institution outside Poland	8
Field of study	**41**
Informatics / Software Engineering	25
Other Applied Sciences	5
Management / Management and Marketing	4
Biotechnology / Chemistry / Biomedical Engineering	4
Social Sciences	3
Length of stay in the United States *(in years)*	**41**
Min-Max = 1–26	
Mean (SD) = 5.7 (5.3)	
less than 3	11
3–5	20
6–10	6
more than 10	4
Visa status upon entry to the United States	**40**
L1B	18
H1B	12
Other temporary visas (including L2, B, J, O)	6
Permanent residency	4
Legal status at the time of the interview	**41**
Temporary visa	14
Permanent residency application submitted	8
Permanent residency	11
Citizenship	8

Note: *Participants who attended higher education institutions in both Poland and other countries are counted twice; therefore, the sum is greater than the total number of participants.

Characteristics and migration experiences

The analysis of interviews with Polish high-tech professionals in Silicon Valley elucidated seven areas of participants' biographies, including (1) primary conditions; (2) migration motivations; (3) adaptation processes; (4) establishing and maintaining relationships; (5) professional career in Silicon Valley; (6) identity challenges; and (7) plans for the future. All the quotations below came from interviews with my participants, were translated from Polish into English and then edited for grammar and clarity while retaining the original context and meaning. The names of the interviewees have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Primary conditions

Many participants began their professional careers while still in college, which they considered a competitive advantage factor in the labour market. Their motivations to work varied. Some started their first jobs out of curiosity, due to free time or for fun. Others were motivated by the prospect of high compensation and the opportunity to pay off financial obligations or have a head-start over their peers. Professional experience was indicated as equally important as formal education, as Krzysztof reveals:

> *At the age of 19, when I was in the second year of college, I started working in the IT industry and worked all the time until the end of college... In the last semester, I gave up the second major... I have been told my whole life that you study to have a good job, and I had a good job.*

English-language skills were considered a prerequisite for employment in an international company and more important than technical skills. Several of my interlocutors even decided to pursue a university degree in English, despite the high costs and significant effort involved. Respondents indicated that possessing job-related English skills accelerated their professional careers by helping them to build and maintain professional relationships beyond their country of origin. These findings echo research by Ong *et al.* (1996) and Wagner (2011) which showed that English skills increase mobility by extending the professional network and facilitating access to international job offers.

My interviewees had a proactive outlook on life, intentionally pursued their dreams and passions, did not fear changes and unexpected situations, were open to new experiences and willing to learn new skills and continuously broaden their knowledge. They actively pursued satisfying careers that suited their interests, talents and personalities. Therefore, like Anna, below, they were willing to put considerable effort into acquiring new skills and to obtain a dream job:

> *I started my career as a chemist. After four years, I realised that… job would not satisfy me until the end of my career. Therefore, I applied to the MBA programme and… I found a job right here, in Silicon Valley, in marketing in the medical devices industry.*

The three features of high-tech professionals described above (having early work experiences, learning English to have more professional opportunities and being intentional about their careers and willingness to learn), defined in the study as 'primary conditions', were found to be personality predispositions, life experiences, intentional individual decisions and external circumstances that preceded or occurred at an early stage of their professional careers, facilitating mobility and leading to them 'becoming' an international professional. Those findings contribute to research on transnational professionals, indicating that upon completing the training, they possess standardised knowledge, English skills and knowledge of Western scientific methods, culture and

work style (Ong *et al.* 1996) and, therefore, are well-prepared for international migration (Wagner 2011). Moreover, this suggests that Polish high-tech professionals – among other young Polish employees – who are lifelong learners, open to new experiences and invested in personal and professional growth, are well-equipped to meet market expectations facilitated by fast technological changes with their flexible approach and the ability to quickly absorb new information (Mrozowicki 2016).

Migration motivations

My study participants decided to move to the United States motivated by their curiosity about Silicon Valley and desire to learn, test current and develop new professional skills, face new challenges and take advantage of this unique opportunity. Financial incentives were not claimed to be a direct reason to migrate, which seems to confirm the results of other studies on the adaptation of highly qualified immigrants (Cekiera 2014; Eich-Krohm 2012; Grzymała-Moszczyńska, Grzymała-Moszczyńska and Golińska 2011; Kaczmarczyk and Tyrowicz 2008, 2015) that 'decisions to migrate are far more complex than foreseen by neoclassical economic migration theories' (Kaczmarczyk and Tyrowicz 2015: 3).

The analysis also revealed that some participants decided to move abroad because they could not find exciting work opportunities in Poland (push factors). Others were attracted by the fame and prestige of Silicon Valley, perceived as a technological mecca and a place of extraordinary professional development opportunities (pull factors), as Dawid testifies:

> *I would not try to find any complex motivations here; the matter is simple. Only a few people get a job offer in this company and the opportunity to see what Silicon Valley looks like from the inside. If I did not take advantage of it, I would regret it for the rest of my life... When there is an opportunity, I try to grab it, like this time.*

Some participants stressed that they had come to the United States in exceptional circumstances, considering the history of Polish emigration – holding a visa allowing them to stay and work legally in a profession that matches their level of education and experience. Employers often helped them in completing visa formalities and organising the move. These factors eased their entry and facilitated their adaptation to American society. By contrasting their experiences and migration circumstances with those who migrated to the United States in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries, interviewees, like Izabela, indicated different motivations (economic and political vs individual and educational) and the freedom of modern migrants who now travel freely and can return to Poland whenever they want:

> *We… did not leave for… economic reasons or as politically persecuted people because the country was free then. We had a completely different view of the migration* [from previous migrants].

In fact, the social, political and technological changes of the last decades have significantly altered how people travel. System changes initiated in 1989 in Poland reduced politically motivated migrations and new technological solutions reduced migration's financial and emotional costs. Migration today is not as burdensome and definite as it was in the past, as has been accurately illustrated by Cekiera (2013: 73): 'One does not emigrate today; one is just leaving'. As captured by the transnational perspective, migrants maintain these cross-border connections and transnational social spaces by moving between home and host countries (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Ślusarczyk 2019).

Adaptation processes

Integration happens when 'different individuals and groups, while maintaining their cultural distinctiveness, enter into relatively permanent relationships with the host society and participate in various areas of its life' (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2008: 35). Migrants enter the host society in various dimensions, including legal and institutional, economic, social, identity, cultural or spatial (Ager and Strang 2004; Babiński 2009; Biernath 2008; Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013a, 2013b, 2016; Winiecka 2011). They often experience adaptation difficulties. For many study participants, the move to the United States was perceived as uncomplicated and not much different to changing the place of residence within one country, as Jan shows:

> *You just buy a plane ticket, fly in, rent a hotel, look for a flat, send your belongings from Poland, move in, buy a car, and arrive at work. It's simple… you just move in the same way as you would move between cities in Poland.*

However, some interviewees experienced difficulties that had a negative impact on their initial perception of the new place. Renting a flat, buying a car, setting up a bank account or obtaining a local driving licence, due to their limited knowledge of the procedures and rules of the system, were considered complicated, burdensome and time-consuming. Participants were negatively surprised by the high cost of living in Silicon Valley to the extent that some of them had to revise their financial plans. They were also shocked by the low quality of services and housing conditions, considering the skyrocketing prices.

The other major obstacle was the linguistic issue, defined not as an inability to communicate but as difficulties expressing oneself eloquently and being understood precisely as intended. As Waldinger (2015: 45) suggests, 'language is both a symbol and a tool of membership, functioning simultaneously as the means of communication and as a meaning-laden indicator of group membership since the capacity to speak a common tongue defines the boundaries between insiders and outsiders. For these reasons, language possesses powerful emotional connotations, well beyond its instrumental value'. That is supposedly one of the reasons why participants like Izabela made efforts to increase their language skills:

> *The manner of expression and eloquence we have in our language is impossible to make up for in the second language... I had a problem with it, and I probably still have it.* [My English] *is not as eloquent as it should be. This is not how I speak in Polish, so I worked hard to… speak… and be understood in the way I wanted.*

Over time, however, 'migration [started] transforming the migrants. (…) They absorbed the tastes, preferences and behaviours' (Waldinger 2015: 45) of the new society, acquired social and cultural competence and began understanding social rules and norms. They gained confidence that they could cope in the new environment. They also expanded their circle of friends, increased their exposure to American culture, began intentionally participating in American society and 'established anchors' (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013a, 2013b, 2016). For the high-tech professionals interviewed, their migration status turned out to be one of the crucial factors affecting their adaptation. They wanted to obtain a permanent residency status to gain more stability (so that they could stay in the United States permanently without any restrictions), more mobility (so they could change jobs or move within the United States without any limitations) and more financial opportunities (so they could change employers or their spouse/partner could obtain a job). Some participants, who were also American citizens, indicated that they decided to apply for citizenship so that they could vote and fully participate in the community. Waldinger and Duquette-Rury (2016: 45) argue that 'until the migrants become citizens, they

stand outside the polity, which keeps them distant from the efforts at mobilisation that so often trigger political interest and knowledge'. Referring, then, to the concept of social anchoring, permanent residency or citizenship therefore 'anchor' migrants even more and are the foundation for integration (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2008).

The analysis of my interviews with Polish high-tech professionals revealed that they were open to other cultures, understood cultural nuances and were able to selectively adopt the new cultural rules of the host country without rejecting their previous cultural affiliations, which helped them to thrive in a multicultural environment. Like Krzysztof, they picked the most useful elements of Polish and American cultures:

> *I like certain traditions very much, but I am very open to new ones... For example, I do not think we have to eat Polish food. We like various cuisines; we like Polish and American food and enjoy a good burger or steak but we also like Asian food... We like celebrating Polish traditions but we do not have... such isolation that we only accept Polish traditions and nothing else; that we absolutely cannot mix different traditions… I think we can mix different traditions. We can take cool things and add them to what we do. And I think that's the way it should be because the only healthy approach is to pick what's best* [for you].

These findings shed new light on the intersection of migration and identity. 'Reflecting the inherent duality of their situation', as Green and Waldinger (2016: 17) emphasise, 'the people who are simultaneously immigrants and emigrants often prefer to have it both ways, as opposed to choosing either place of destination or place of origin'. My results also reflect other research from a transnational perspective, suggesting that highly educated migrants of the new era seem to integrate structurally into new societies faster than previous waves of migrants (Babiński 2009; Cekiera 2014; Grzymała Kazłowska 2013a, 2013b; Sosnowska 2016; Wagner 2011) and to drift between two cultures, maintaining the identity of the place of origin and adapting 'only as much as necessary' (Babiński 2009). They do not feel pressure to assimilate (Babiński 2009; Eich-Krohm 2012; Faist *et al.* 2013; Glick Schiller *et al.* 1995; Portes and Rumbaut 2014) but instead selectively adopt some elements of the new culture to adapt effectively to the host society (Babiński 2009; Opiłowska 2014). In this context, transnational practices could be considered as a strategy helping to maintain a balance in migrants' lives and satisfy migrants' needs (Ślusarczyk 2019).

Establishing and maintaining relationships

A successful adaptation to a new social and cultural environment requires establishing new social networks. Since building a network of social contacts – including friends, acquaintances and others whose services are used daily (hairdresser, plumber, mechanic, doctor, lawyer, tax advisor, etc.) – often takes years, my participants felt lonely and lost, particularly during the initial period of migration, as stated by Adam:

> *It was hard for me (...) at the beginning. There was much stress and such a feeling of a lack of help as I was left on my own.*

Therefore, building a social network prevented isolation and anchored interviewees in the host environment (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013a, 2013b). They mainly used social media and existing social networks to find new acquaintances and expand their social networks. Spouses (usually wives), who served as primary caregivers, met new people inside the community and coordinated the family's social life by engaging its members in various social activities.

Building and maintaining successful working relationships with co-workers of various cultural backgrounds and nationalities was considered a laborious effort and challenge. Participants, like Dariusz,

highlighted the necessity of developing a common platform for communication and principles of cooperation that would satisfy all co-workers, which often included polite behaviour, political correctness and discussions based on rational reasoning:

> *First, we have to work more to gain mutual trust with people who speak other languages, come from different cultures and have different habits... We must try a lot more to integrate, learn the new way of thinking, listen, absorb and recognise patterns, preference, and what can and cannot be said.*

The social networks of Polish high-tech professionals encompassed representatives of various cultures and nationalities and were not limited to members of the Polish community. These findings echo research from a transnational approach by Babiński (2009), indicating that modern Polish migrants with high socio-cultural capital and good English skills tend to establish multi-national social networks and are not tied to a Polish ethnic group, as were migrants in the past (Kubiak, Kusielewicz and Gromada 1988). Contrary to Babiński's conclusions – but echoing Gold's research (2018) about Israeli info-tech migrants in Silicon Valley – many participants preferred maintaining relationships with Polish people or other international migrants in Silicon Valley, mainly Europeans, due to their shared migration experiences and cultural similarities. Waldinger (2015: 33) explains this phenomenon: 'migrants… undergo similar experiences… of displacement and strangeness, which is why they suddenly discover a commonality in people originating from the same place. Finding comfort in the company of a familiar face, gaining pleasure from reminiscing about times gone by… migrant hometowners repeatedly come together'. Therefore, some participants found it easier to build lasting connections with fellow European or Polish immigrants, as Marek points out:

> *It is easier for me to make friends with Poles or other migrants, mainly from Europe, than with people from the United States or those who were brought up here. I understand them more; their culture is closer to mine; I know what to expect from them... Their mentality is also different. They are not afraid to face challenges, have broad interests and can do many things by themselves. Americans are not interesting* [to me]*; I don't understand social norms and do not know how to behave in their company. It's much easier for me to understand people from Europe, especially from Poland.*

While establishing new social networks in the host country, the high-tech professionals I interviewed maintained relationships with significant others who remained in Poland. Such transnational practices supported migrants emotionally, gave them a sense of stability, fulfilled their needs in the interim (Erdal and Oeppen 2013; Morawska 2003; Pustułka and Ślusarczyk 2016) and prolonged their home-country orientation (Waldinger 2015). Moreover, obligations to the family at home (particularly concerns about ageing parents) kept migrants engaged with the country of origin (Waldinger and Duquette-Rury 2016). Importantly, what somehow contradicts the transnational approach is that migration changed the relationship between migrants and those who stayed behind in the home country. Consistent with Waldinger's arguments (2015: 41), 'a variety of factors embed migrants in the receiving country's national social field, tearing them away and differentiating them from the people and places left behind'. The migrants feel 'betwixt and between their new and old homes, in the country of immigration but of the country of emigration' (Waldinger 2015: 41). Relationships change because migrants and stay-at-homes undergo different experiences and because migration also transforms migrants who 'develop a new set of wants, needs and expectations that are no longer fully compatible with the ways of life and modes of behaviour back home. Those changing orientations generate conflict in the cross-border relationship' (Waldinger 2015: 178), resulting in identity challenges.

The professional career in Silicon Valley

My participants perceived Silicon Valley as the professional reference point, which echoes other research findings (Latusek-Jurczak 2014). Its worldwide fame and countless professional development opportunities were indicated as pull factors. Interviewees emphasised the importance and potential of Silicon Valley on a global scale (as a significant contributor to new technologies and inventions) and on an individual level (as a career accelerator). Like Dariusz, they indicated that Silicon Valley is a unique ecosystem facilitating technological innovations:

> *Silicon Valley for the IT industry is like New York City for the financial sector. People want a place where everything is concentrated and it is much easier to meet for coffee with someone and do business. This usually entails the need for engineers who make the idea reality. As with most of the accelerators, venture capitalists and angel investors located here, that's what makes most of the solutions and start-ups here. They then turn into corporations that remain here, creating a centre of gravity that constantly absorbs and attracts.*

Some interviewees, particularly those with a status allowing them to change employment, highlighted that Silicon Valley was a place of endless opportunities for high-tech professionals. With the abundance of job opportunities on the market, they could choose more risky but innovative and exciting projects. They were not afraid to negotiate employment conditions. Additionally, they knew the qualifications and value which they brought to the table. In a worst-case scenario of losing a job, they could get employed somewhere else 'the next day', according to Tomasz:

> *I don't have to worry about anything here. When I am fired from one company, I will find a job in another company for the same or higher compensation the next day.*

The high-tech migrants interviewed often began their professional careers in international companies, where they travelled abroad and collaborated with co-workers of various nationalities and cultures. They knew how to work with co-workers of diverse cultural backgrounds. Even if that sometimes required putting in more effort at the start to make it work, respondents believed each member of such a multicultural team could contribute by bringing different perspectives. As Dawid said, they repeatedly emphasised that a multi-ethnic team could create a new quality, significantly exceeding the contribution of individuals:

> *Cultural diversity is fantastic. Everyone contributes… a different view. Everyone… looks at a given problem from a perspective I would never have considered. This is… invaluable.*

Participants suggested that it was easy to adapt to and blend in with the multicultural inhabitants of Silicon Valley. Public institutions and businesses are prepared to provide services to foreigners (such as driving tests in various languages or interpreting services in government and healthcare institutions). Moreover, American employers recognised participants' credentials without additional requirements, which meant that they could work in the United States, immediately upon arrival, at their qualifications and educational level, which placed them in the middle tier of the social structure and facilitated structural adaptation processes.

Many interviewees showed idealistic traits regarding their work and profession (Grzeszczyk 2003). They considered work as a place to develop and fulfil ideas and were emotionally invested in it. High-tech professionals rated being helpful to others, participating in significant projects, influencing the final results

and having a sense of fulfilment at work which was greater than financial incentives. They believed that, to be a true professional in high technology, a person should love their work and treat it as a hobby. Therefore, as Jan indicates, they considered continuous training to stay up to date as a natural part of their career and personal growth:

> *In IT… you have to love and be interested in what you do... It has to be your hobby, your passion. Only then can you keep up with what is happening... What I did a year ago is outdated. Today, everything changes so quickly... From week to week, I have to learn what is up to date by doing projects on the side. I also have to love what I do. Otherwise, I couldn't be a good engineer.*

The above arguments do not prove that the prospect of higher compensation cannot be an effective stimulus for a job change; however, it may not be the only or sufficient reason. My participants switched jobs when they did not see more opportunities for further development or felt boredom, stagnation or a lack of impact. Changing jobs – especially for permanent residents or American citizens with more freedom and opportunities than temporary migrants – was relatively easy.

Identity challenges

Research demonstrates that migration is a transformative experience and significant life event that facilitates reflection on a person's life, identity, cultural affiliations, norms and values and broadens migrants' mental horizons (Cekiera 2014; Green and Waldinger 2016; Grzymała-Moszczyńska *et al.* 2011; Raczyński 2019). Polish high-tech professionals in Silicon Valley also considered migration a life-altering event that allowed them to confront their values, biases and stereotypes internalised during the socialisation process, provoking insightful self-conscious work and leading to profound identity changes.

As already indicated, the transnational literature suggests that migrants may sometimes develop a sense of having two homes (Babiński 2009) or, on the contrary, feel completely lost and as if they had no home at all (Waldinger 2015), reflecting the argument by Waldinger and Duquette-Rury (2016: 42), that 'every immigrant is an emigrant, every alien a citizen, every foreigner a national (and) these dualities lie at the heart of the migration process, leaving migrants caught in a dialectic of constant tension'. My interviewees indeed indicated that they had more than one cultural reference. They found it difficult to choose the most important one, which often caused identity conflicts and made them feel insecure and alienated. As Dorota explains, participants – particularly at the early stages of migration –experienced loneliness, a lack of support and a feeling of being 'split' between Poland and the United States:

> *I miss the Polish mentality, the one that everyone is complaining about. Here, I discovered that I liked my country more than I thought. I just know one hundred per cent that I will never get along with foreigners the way I do with Poles; we will not have such an understanding. It is rare to have someone you are so close to here.*

Polish high-tech professionals, as mentioned earlier, could adapt to the new society 'as much as necessary' (Babiński 2009: 221) while maintaining their Polish identity. They did not feel pressure to fully assimilate into American culture and they made significant efforts to preserve their Polish identity by speaking Polish at home, keeping in touch with their family and relatives from Poland, regularly travelling to Poland, celebrating Polish traditions and teaching their children the Polish language, unlike migrants from the past who preferred to blend in at the expense of losing their previous identification (Babiński 2009; Kubiak *et al.* 1988). However, they

realised that, even if they 'may continue to identify with the home community, they do so as residents and sometimes members of a foreign country' (Waldinger 2013: 763) with different experiences and sets of needs and expectations. Over time, therefore, their ties with relatives and friends in Poland weakened, contributing to further identity transformations.

My analysis also revealed that emigration to the United States changed how participants perceived place, distance and what was culturally close and distant. 'Place' is an important block in building identity since all human experiences, memories and emotions are associated with some significant place. Symbolically, people refer to place when determining where they 'feel at home', meaning where they feel safe, free and themselves. In a transnational context, significant places are assumed to be located both in the country of origin and in the host country and the physical distance affects both the way they are perceived and the decisions and life strategies of migrants (Ślusarczyk 2019: 29). Polish high-tech professionals felt cultural proximity with other Europeans and defined themselves as Europeans, not just as Poles. They highlighted that Europe became their home when they moved to the United States. Europe, from their perspective, was close (geographically and culturally) compared to the West Coast of the United States. Patryk, for example, indicated that travelling from Silicon Valley to Poland to visit a family takes a massive amount of effort (including both transportation costs and time commitment):

> *How you perceive distance changes a lot when you arrive here. An hour-and-a-half flight to England by Ryanair, which costs you less than a hundred dollars per return trip… well, is not worth mentioning compared to the expenses you incur here. Fourteen hours of flight plus costs, that's a lot... Europe is now home; once, Poland was home and now Europe is home.*

Emigration also became an opportunity for participants to test their relationships, broaden their horizons, learn their abilities and gain a perspective on existing stereotypes, principles and authorities, which is consistent with other reports (Cekiera 2014; Grzymała-Moszczyńska *et al.* 2011; Raczyński 2019). Interviewees emphasised that migration, though sometimes challenging, has many positive consequences: it transforms how people perceive social reality, enriches and strengthens them internally and increases their self-esteem and self-confidence. Successful adaptation increased self-confidence and self-esteem and fostered freedom and personal emancipation among my participants. Like Piotr, they believed that immersing themselves in more than one culture helped them to become more mindful and awake, to question the authorities and established habits and to reshape their identity more intentionally:

> *Getting away from your circle, home or culture opens your eyes... to all kinds of ideas and approaches to life – to be a better person… At some point, you start to question how you were brought up... It allows you… to self-shape even more, consider who you want to be and what approach in life you prefer.*

Plans for the future

My interviewees perceived the future as full of possibilities. They welcomed change with excitement and did not want to make final decisions about their future. Intentional unpredictability (defined as refraining from determining their migration timeframe and plans) was indicated as a common strategy in their decision-making processes and professional career plans, reflecting other research findings (Cekiera 2014; Eade *et al*. 2006). Interestingly, uncertainty regarding the future was not considered to be a destabilising element but a manifestation of participants' value systems, prioritising freedom and offering multiple choices. As Hatalska (2017) demonstrated, transnational professionals value mobility, freedom and independence and choose

a lifestyle aligned with these values. Therefore, for my high-tech professional interviewees, plans were always subject to change when there was a new, more attractive offer. The concept of simultaneity (being 'here' and 'there' at the same time), proposed by the transnational approach, may explain why high-tech professionals easily 'rotate back and forth and change direction over time (…) depending on the context' (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). 'Developing and maintaining multiple relations – familial, economic, social, organisational, religious and political – that span borders' (Glick Schiller *et al.* 1992: 1) helps such 'transmigrants' to stay connected to more than one socio-cultural environment.

The stimulus for change was not necessarily a financial factor but, rather, a result of stagnation in the workplace, a lack of intellectual challenges and a loss of motivation resulting from the lack of influence on the work results, as Dawid explains:

> *I have no plans. Life has offered me so many unexpected possibilities so far. If something interesting happens, then… I will no doubt jump in and give it a try. However, I do not plan my life. We'll see what it brings.*

The analysis suggests that high-tech professionals differ in how they define emigration and its timeframe. Some saw it as a temporary episode and perceived their stay in the United States as an opportunity to learn, develop professional skills and grow personally. They wanted to 'squeeze' as much as possible from this opportunity, so they travelled extensively and participated in various business conferences, workshops and other professional events. However, since, like Andrzej, they did not plan to stay in the United States permanently, they did not feel the need to integrate, build relations or invest in household appliances or furniture:

> *I left a flat and car in Poland… Everything is there and waiting. It wasn't like we abandoned everything and came here. We didn't even want to buy new furniture; we assumed that we would only stay here for a year…* [and then] *move back to Poland. So, we sent worn-out furniture from Poland here.*

Others, like Izabela, considered migration as a permanent life event and believed that this was the only approach to achieve socio-psychological stabilisation and successfully adapt to a new socio-cultural environment:

> *You cannot look back and be in a situation where you are not entirely sure what you want, i.e., with one foot somewhere in Poland and the other foot in the United States. Something like this... can lead to a nervous breakdown... I never say that I am somewhere permanently. I never plan where I will live in five or ten years because I don't know...* [However], *my whole life revolves around my work, friends and children and I am not here temporarily... The fact that I do not plan to be here in five years gives me a sense of stability... As long as you are open to various possibilities, you can feel fulfilment and satisfaction.*

This study also reveals that, despite being open to new opportunities, migrants create connections (anchors) over time that help them to maintain a sense of stability and belonging. My analysis discovered three main types of anchor: social (e.g., children and established social networks), professional (e.g., satisfying jobs for professionals and their spouses) and psychological (e.g., fear of returning to Poland). This is closely tied to Grzymała-Kazłowska's (2013a, 2013b) concept of social anchoring. Children, friends and work were the most significant reference points in the new social reality. In addition, professionals with temporary visas desired permanent resident status, which would anchor them even more. Participants also highlighted factors which

lead to leaving the United States, including economic (e.g., high cost of living), identity and social (e.g., longing for the country of origin) and family and lifecycle factors (e.g., the need to care for ageing parents).

Conclusions

This article, drawing on a qualitative study of 46 interviews, investigated the characteristics and migration experiences of Polish high-tech professionals in Silicon Valley. The analysis centred around the primary conditions leading participants to become transnational professionals, their migration motivations and cultural and structural integration into the new socio-cultural environment, the impact of emigration on their perception of social reality and their identity transformations and future planning strategies. The study generated new knowledge on highly educated Polish migrants in the United States. It contributes to the existing body of literature in migration research by offering a nuanced insight into the motivations, identities and values of modern highly skilled migrants, providing new ways of understanding their decision-making processes on migration and settlement. It may serve as a source of information for prospective migrants and migration policymakers.

The study aimed to answer the five research questions presented in the introduction. The analysis revealed three 'primary conditions' (factors that preceded or occurred at an early stage of professional careers, facilitating mobility and leading them to 'becoming' an international professional): having early work experience, good English skills and being intentional about their career and willingness to learn (Q1). Participants often began their professional careers with international companies, frequently travelling abroad and collaborating with co-workers of various nationalities and cultures. Therefore, they knew how to build and maintain lasting relationships with representatives of diverse cultural backgrounds. High-tech professionals were aware of their qualifications and value on the job market. They were not afraid to get involved in risky but innovative and exciting projects and to negotiate employment conditions. Moreover, working immediately upon arrival at their qualifications and educational level helped them to get placed in the middle tier of the social structure, facilitating structural adaptation (Q2). The participants decided to move to the United States motivated by their curiosity about Silicon Valley and desire to learn. They wanted to learn, test their professional skills, face new challenges and gain new experiences. Financial incentives were not claimed to be a direct reason to migrate (Q3). High-tech professionals were well prepared for international migration and able to integrate quickly into the multicultural environment of Silicon Valley by selectively adopting the cultural rules of a host society without rejecting their previous cultural affiliations. Intentional unpredictability was indicated as a strategy regarding decision-making processes and professional career plans (Q4). Migration was considered as a significant event in the participants' lives that revised their perceptions of reality and facilitated self-reflection. Immersion in the new socio-cultural environment became an opportunity to verify relationships, broaden horizons and gain a perspective regarding existing stereotypes, principles and authorities (Q5).

As noted before, research on the migration of transnational professionals is limited, with much more still to be discovered. In the context of this study, two topics, in particular, require further investigation. Firstly, there is a need to continue research on contemporary migrants with high social and cultural capital from Poland. The circumstances of their migration are different to people who left Poland before 1989 or even 2004 (Poland's accession to the European Union) due to their unique characteristics and the rapid social, economic and technological changes in recent years. It would be valuable to understand more about their adaptation patterns and identity changes resulting from immersion in a new culture, how they build and maintain Polish cultural affiliation in the second and subsequent generations, as well as about transnational families, as this type of family becomes increasingly common (Plewko 2016; Slany, Ślusarczyk and Krzyżowski 2014;

Ślusarczyk 2019). Secondly, my participants repeatedly raised the topic of the adaptation of their family members, in particularly spouses in the professional sphere, as this influences the overall success of family migration and integration. Researchers mainly focus on lead migrants, assuming that they are the decision-makers. Sparse study findings demonstrate, however, their spouses are generally highly educated themselves and worked professionally (often in respectable professions and at high-level positions) before the family migrated abroad. Their experiences upon arrival may be entirely different. While their spouses start working in the United States right away and their professional identity is not challenged, tied migrants are often excluded from the professional sphere, at least for a while, due to visa limitations or a lack of knowledge of the labour market and its rules. Spouses, however, play an important and often decisive role in the migrant family, and their adaptation success (or lack thereof) may largely influence the decision to stay or leave (Caligiuri and Tung 1999; Eich Krohm 2007, 2012). Therefore, future research exploring their identity challenges and their coping strategies is warranted.

Notes

1. The findings in this article come from my doctoral dissertation entitled 'Polish High-Tech Specialists in Silicon Valley: A Sociological Portrayal'. Some material in the article may overlap with the information presented in other publications (Sasnal 2021a, 2021b).
2. The geographical boundaries of Silicon Valley include Santa Clara County (all), San Mateo County (all), Alameda County (part) and Santa Cruz County (part) (Joint Venture Silicon Valley, Institute for Regional Studies 2021: 6).
3. Migration is defined in this article as mobility related to crossing a state border. A migrant is anyone who crosses the state border (excluding people travelling for tourism, recreation and business purposes), regardless of the duration of their stay (Górny and Kaczmarczyk 2003: 9). The broad definition of migration has been chosen to capture various types of mobility, not only a permanent change of place of residence.
4. High technologies are defined in this article as 'fields and products characterized by high research and development intensity, and in addition, they are characterized by a high level of innovation, short product and process life cycle, rapid diffusion of innovation, increasing demand for highly qualified personnel (especially in the field of technical and natural sciences), large capital expenditure, high investment risk (and rapid 'aging' of investments), close scientific and technical cooperation (within individual countries and on the international arena between enterprises and research institutions) and increasing competition in international trade' (Ratajczak-Mrozek 2011: 26). In addition, high-tech industries include, *inter alia*, the production of electronic products, telecommunications, computer and electronic equipment, aircraft and services requiring high-tech knowledge, telecommunications activities related to software, IT consulting, the Internet and research and development in the field of biotechnology, natural and technical sciences (The National Centre for Research and Development 2017).
5. 1989 refers to the transformation of a socio-political system (from socialist to democratic) in Poland that hugely affected migration patterns and motivations and provided new migration opportunities for Polish citizens.
6. I conducted 40 interviews with 41 high-tech professionals (39 individual interviews and one interview with a couple of high-tech professionals).

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Detecting Urban Resilience. Foreign Residents' Perceptions and Experiences of Public Services in a Globalising City: A Case Study of Krakow

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In tennis, the sweet spot on a racket marks the point at which a ball can be hit with the greatest power for the least effort. Public services in the globalising city of Krakow found themselves in precisely such a position before the large-scale forced migration inflows as a result of Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2022. An analysis of the evaluations of public services by foreign residents in Krakow during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2021) reveals, on the one hand, the overall satisfaction of users yet, on the other, significant differences in expectations and experiences amongst categories of foreign residents coming from global core, semi-peripheral and peripheral regions. The findings shed light on the nature of urban resilience in globalising cities like Krakow, which is encountering migration transitions, as well as the uneven nature of globalisation between services that have been internationalised and those which have not. The results expose considerable gaps in the process of the multi-faceted adaptation of city public services to meet the expectations of their dynamically changing population. The findings are particularly significant in the context of intensive forced migration inflows from Ukraine, critically reflecting on the resilience of public services on the eve of major shifts in population flows into the city.

Keywords: globalising city, migration transition, semi-periphery, public services, resilient city, COVID-19

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Introduction

When thinking about global cities and the intense international migratory flows which fuel and shape them, the image of Krakow, a 'secondary city' tucked away in the south of Poland, does not immediately come to mind. In fact, it may not even feature on a conceptual map of nodes and flows, located in what has been termed the Global East (Müller 2020), an elusive in-between space in the global system of movement of goods, capital, services and, importantly, labour. Yet this urban centre, situated on the semi-periphery between the Global North and the Global South, is experiencing a dynamic transformation. In 2017, Krakow ranked eighth in the world of 'Super Cities' on the Tholons Services Globalization Index (Tholons 2017); it features prominently among the most popular European tourist and student destinations and, importantly, it is located in a country undergoing an unprecedented migration transition. Since 2016, Poland has been the top destination for non-EU nationals entering the EU, primarily for work reasons (Eurostat 2021). Krakow, like other cities in Poland, has primarily attracted migrants from its neighbourhood – predominantly from Ukraine but also increasingly from Belarus and Russia. Yet it has also seen migratory flows from culturally distant regions such as India, Vietnam, Brazil and the countries of North Africa, as well as migration from the so-called 'West' – from EU countries such as Germany, Italy, Spain and France as well as the USA (Pędziwiatr, Stonawski and Brzozowski 2020). This dynamic change is, by all accounts, just the tip of the iceberg of the social transformations that this region will face in the next years on account of the forced migration inflows from the war in Ukraine, coupled with an acute demographic deficit and concomitant labour shortages, low unemployment rates and its positioning at the crossroads of geopolitical instability in the Eastern neighbourhood.

It is thus an urban centre caught in a conceptual paradox: at once a liminal space in the global system of nodes and flows but, at the same time, a key semi-peripheral thoroughfare which supports and links, in Wallerstein's World Systems analysis (Wallerstein 2004), the global core with the peripheries. This positionality provides for a unique space from which to observe and analyse how Krakow, a city at these crossroads, copes and adapts to increasing demands on its public services and the need to form inclusive policies for an increasingly diverse citizenry, all in the context of the external shock of the COVID-19 pandemic and forced migration inflows as a result of the war in Ukraine.

We analyse this paradox through the lens of the globalising city (Brenner 2019; Marcuse and van Kempen 2000; Ren and Keil 2018), underscoring the processual nature of urbanisation *vis-à-vis* globalisation, whilst critically reflecting on the modernisation theory implicit in global cities research which leads to an illusion of having to 'catch up' with the West. We understand the term 'globalising city' through a critical lens, highlighting the multi-scalar approach to urban processes wherein the role of state institutions and regional positioning cannot be overlooked and where the aspiration model of global cities is questioned (Robinson 2002). This dynamic, relational conceptual framework allows for a more nuanced analysis of the city's resilience. The term 'urban resilience' has gained remarkable popularity in recent years, making it a paradoxically blurred term (Meerow, Newell and Stults 2016). Referring to the capacity of urban environments to maintain or return to desired functions in the face of disturbances, to adapt to changes and to transform systems that limit current or future adaptive capacity (Meerow *et al*. 2016: 39), resilience frameworks have largely focused on environmental and economic pressures, largely bypassing migration as an important exogenous factor affecting the ability of a city to react and adapt. The exception is Zapata-Barrero's (2023) attempt to provide a conceptual and analytical framework for researching urban migration governance through the resilience lens. Urban resilience, when applied to migration governance, underscores the proactive, transformative nature of the concept, focusing on issues such as urban justice, the fight against exclusion and the building of liveable and inclusive neighbourhoods (Zapata-Barrero 2023).

In our research, we focus on the perspective of international migrants – key actors in the process of transformation of globalising cities and metaphorical 'detectors' of a city's resilience – who come with different images and expectations of these off-the-map spaces, depending on their geographical, linguistic and cultural proximity and their positioning within the global imaginary of North and South. This is perhaps the most evident in their expectations of public services, seen as the face of the state and its institutions embedded in the urban space. An analysis of the differing expectations and experiences in foreign nationals' access to public services and their ensuing levels of overall satisfaction with services, gives rise to an image of the city's urban resilience: its capacity to adapt to its users, its positioning *vis-à-vis* the dynamically changing expectations of its inhabitants and its ability to cope and deliver on these expectations.

Through the lens of the globalising city of Krakow, we analyse and compare the attitudes and experiences of three geographically bound categories of origin of foreign nationals in using public services offered in the city. We aim to diagnose the urban resilience of the city in the face of migratory pressures through migrants' expectations, the barriers which they face in accessing public services and their overall evaluation of their experiences. The research is based on a mixed-methods approach consisting of a quantitative survey (n = 292) and semi-structured interviews (n = 20) conducted between June 2020 and June 2021. We have taken a citizen-centred approach to assessing access to public services based on three categories of experience: 'at the gates', particularly the access to information about public services; 'through the doors', experiences of interpersonal exchanges and equal or fair treatment whilst using the services; and 'at the exit', looking back at the overall quality of and satisfaction with their experience. Five spheres of public services were considered, ranging from those the most affected by globalisation to those the least affected. These were, respectively, culture, public transportation, public administration, education and health care.

The research fills a much-needed gap in the literature on globalising cities in the 'Global East' which are virtually absent from academic discussions (Müller 2020), particularly in urban studies. It also adds to the currently under-researched sub-field of migration governance through an urban resilience lens (Zapata-Barrero 2023). The unprecedented migration transition in this region – which is arguably at its most dynamic and accelerated stage – provides a propitious moment for analysing the way in which different categories of migrants perceive, experience and evaluate the institutional functioning of the system in the form of public services and the opportunities and challenges this has for municipalities in coping, adapting and positioning themselves *vis-à-vis* their rapidly changing populations.

The unique context of the global COVID-19 pandemic has added to the pertinence of the study by facilitating a more profound consideration of the problems and challenges which have been exposed during the crisis in relation to foreign residents' access to public services. The observations, experiences and evaluations of foreign nationals in this situation become a sort of litmus test for the ability of the city to adapt to difficult external shocks such as a global pandemic and refugee crisis, while exposing the challenges and opportunities of semi-peripheral cities within core structures like the European Union, attracting migrants mainly from neighbouring peripheries but also lifestyle migration from core regions and skilled and semi-skilled migrants from global semi-peripheries.

The global and globalising city in the context of urban resilience

Global cities form the core of social imaginaries and geographies of accelerated globalisation, the nodes in a system of flows which concentrate on international capital, commodities and labour (Friedmann and Wolff 1982; Sassen [1991] 2002). The term global city has been in use since the early 1980s, a period which saw the capitalist reshaping of the global world order, marked by a new international division of labour and the demise of the post-war Fordist regime of accumulation, encompassing the world's Global City Archipelagos, such as

New York and London (Brenner 2019). This geo-economic context has, to a great extent, determined the contemporary meaning of the term 'global city', quantified by city rankings based on indicators such as economic viability, business climate, real-estate prices and human-capital reserve (Ren and Keil 2018). From this perspective, the global city is primarily a strategic command and control centre for transnational corporations and has significant advantages over other cities – often termed as 'winner-takes-all cities' or 'superstar cities' (Florida, Mellander and King 2021).

The term 'globalising city', on the other hand, is used in contemporary urban studies to underscore the idea that cities are not static structures but are constantly undergoing processes of transformation. This coincides with a 'scalar turn' in urban studies in the 1990s which emphasised the urban not as a fixed territory but as a multi-scalar concept. This frame seeks to analyse how cities and urban systems are being (re)integrated into the worldwide division of labour and their positionalities in relation to the local, regional, national and global (Brenner 2019). Globalising cities can also be seen as those cities in the process of gaining 'globality' – meaning 'reflexive globalization, a global everyday experience and consciousness of the global' (Beck 2002: 21). The nexus between global and globalising cities also lends itself to broader and critical post-coloniality discussions and a reassessment of the world system of core–periphery, placing emphasis on the exclusion of alternative forms of urban development and the hierarchical power relations between global economic 'performers' and 'underperformers' and critically rethinking global cities as aspiration models and standards for economic dynamism around the world (Robinson 2002; Roy 2016). An increasing interest in alternative cartographies of globalisation in the form of secondary cities (Chen and Kanna 2012) in the context of globalisation and alternative modes of development has given rise to works such as that of Çağlar and Glick Schiller (2018), focusing on the role of migrants and their agency in the urban regeneration of marginal cities.

We use the notion of the globalising city in this research to highlight the positionality of those urban centres in the process of gaining a foothold in the global system of nodes and flows – finding themselves somewhere between global cities or 'command centres' and those remaining urban centres which are, instead, the objects of globalisation. From the world-systems theory based on core–periphery models of asymmetrical capitalist production (Wallerstein 2004), these cities are located on the semi-periphery and with regional scales of influence, reflected in the specific structure of their labour market and institutions, even if their labour market is highly internationalised (Skeldon 2012). For the purposes of our study, globalising cities are thus characterised by (i) their semi-peripheral position in the urban global hierarchy, reflected in the specific structure of their labour markets and institutions – even if their labour markets are highly internationalised; (ii) a dynamic transformation of the population in the form of a migration transition; and (iii) an asymmetry in the adaptation of institutional structures and services with patterns of culture characteristic of the 'banal cosmopolitanism' (Beck 2002) of the global city. International migrants who are characteristic of such cities – professional elites, labour migrants, students – from increasingly different cultural backgrounds and worldviews, fulfil the role of metaphorical detectors of weaknesses and of catalysts for the adaptation of institutions and patterns of culture to the concept of 'banal cosmopolitanism', forging a 'laboratory of production' of urban resilience.

The concept of urban resilience has become an important topic in recent years, both at EU policy level (New European Bauhaus) and in the urban policies of particular cities. The most spectacular examples of such policies to strengthen urban resilience are the 15-minute city concept in Paris and the superblock concept in Barcelona. In both cases, in addition to reducing the energy intensity of cities, a key role is to be played by strengthening neighbourhoods through, among other things, the availability of public services within them (Kubicki 2021). In the research on urban resilience in migration governance, studies have underscored the importance of liveable and inclusive neighbourhoods, the fight against exclusion, the fight for access to public resources and urban justice and the right to have rights (Zapata-Barrero 2023). To address the 'diversity gap'

in public administration jobs in Barcelona, for example, the city has developed strategies to incorporate criteria such as intercultural and language skills as a condition of access to the function of civil servant (Zapata-Barrero 2023). Other research has highlighted the way in which substantive access to public services by foreign nationals is mediated through their interactions with frontline workers (or 'street-level bureaucrats'), who act as gatekeepers of inclusion or exclusion based on their perceptions of the 'deservingness' of access to these services, informed by a client's behaviour or nationality-based stereotypes (Ratzmann and Sahraoui 2021). In the present study, we likewise focus our analysis on the substantive access to public services of increasingly diverse inhabitants, yet we do this not through the analysis of changes in policy and practices but from the perspective of foreign nationals and their experiences of these services. The capacity of a city's public services to adapt to new inhabitants, its flexibility *vis-à-vis* the dynamically changing expectations of diverse inhabitants and its ability to cope and deliver on these expectations are key markers of the readiness of the city to respond to migratory and diversity-related pressures. It is through the perceptions and evaluations of foreign nationals in the local population that we seek to understand this resilience.

The Global East and the Polish migratory transition

The urban hierarchy in Europe (centre–periphery relations) has developed in the *longue-durée* process (Rokkan and Urwin 1983; Wallerstein 2004), not having significantly changed over the centuries. As a symbolic example of such dependencies, we can point to the so-called 'Blue Banana' – an area comprising London, Amsterdam, Brussels, Dortmund, Frankfurt, Basle, Zurich and Milan – highlighting the European economic urban hubs (Gert 2003). Conspicuously missing from this image are cities in Central and Eastern Europe. As Müller (2020: 736) notes, 'countries in the East may be on the way northward, but at the same time seem stuck in eternal transition towards an elusive modernity'. This grey area on the map of Europe and Central Asia is conceptualised by Müller as an epistemic space of 'Global East' and in Wallerstein's (2004) world-systems theory, positioned on the semi-periphery. However, this image has been complicated by the fall of the Iron Curtain and by the EU accession of a part of this epistemic geographical space, marking a splintered transformation that places some of these regions at the outer edges of the core of Europe and others in the near periphery on the other side of EU borders.

One of the most important markers of the watershed between global cores and peripheries is migration flows: the semi-periphery becomes a hub linking global flows to command centres and migrants become transnational development agents and significant actors in shaping the dynamics of transformation at the social, cultural, political and institutional levels (Faist 2007). A kind of milestone in migration theories becomes empirically tangible: the migratory transition – or turnaround – occurring as the number of people arriving in a given society exceeds the number leaving it (King 2019; Skeldon 2012).

Poland has become a key case study in this regard, having witnessed a migratory transition throughout the last decade which, in 2016, saw positive net-migration flows for the first time in its modern history. According to official data from the Central Statistical Office in Poland, between 2013 and 2018, migratory inflows increased by 254 per cent from the previous period, highlighting the scale of the transition (Statistics Poland 2018). Between 24 February and the end of April 2022, Poland witnessed an inflow of 2.9 million refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine (UNHCR 2022). Yet it would be somewhat pre-emptive to label Poland as a country of immigration or a long-term refugee destination – the flows are overwhelmingly short-term, suggesting that a shift will take place once migrants start settling down on a large scale (Okólski and Wach 2020). We also maintain a certain wariness in prematurely applying migration transition theory, suggesting that its weakness, as other scholars have pointed out, lies in assuming a modernisation theory approach of linear progress, which would assume a path to becoming a 'core' immigration country (de Haas 2010; Skeldon 2012; Zelinsky 1971).

We thus focus on what could be labelled a 'transition moment' in the 'expanding core' (Skeldon 1997) – a semi-peripheral space between the immigration centre of Western European countries and the migration periphery to the east (Żołędowski 2020).

Case study: Krakow as a globalising city

As a globalising city on the semi-periphery of urban centres in the European Union, Krakow offers an interesting and less-studied perspective on the nexus between international migration, urban development and adaptation, the latter seen here as a flexible and dynamic process reliant on multi-scalar interdependencies, of which the national level is paramount. Krakow was cut off from global flows by the Iron Curtain for many decades, followed by the abrupt rite of passage from a socialist to a capitalist city after 1989. Polish cities, like others in the region, 'suddenly' became a part of the global free market but their infrastructure (airports, roads, etc.), institutions (public services, universities, cultural industry), patterns of culture and behaviour all remained anchored in legacies of the old system (Pickvance 2002). Polish cities were not seen as attractive to labour or lifestyle migrants during this period – in fact, its open borders after accession to the EU initially stimulated the opposite process, allowing for the mass emigration of Poles to Western countries which, in turn, stimulated the process of social change within the country (White, Grabowska, Kaczmarczyk and Slany 2018).

Yet, by the mid-2010s, Krakow's attractiveness for international migration had become tangible, with the number of incoming migrants noted in the *voivodship* (region) rising steadily from year to year, even amidst the global pandemic in 2020 (Pędziwiatr *et al*. 2020). In a city of approximately 750,000 inhabitants, foreigners made up an increasingly significant segment of the population – approximately 7 per cent of all inhabitants, according to various official statistics[1] (Pędziwiatr *et al*. 2022). By April 2022, according to some statistics, the number of inhabitants had risen to 957,531, with Ukrainian citizens accounting for 19 per cent of all inhabitants (Wojdat and Cywiński 2022: 26). The dynamic growth of civil-society organisations focused on multicultural activities and migrant integration since the mid-2010s – which formed the backbone of the humanitarian response to the forced migration flows from the onset of Russian aggression on Ukraine in February 2022 – is likewise a symbolic marker of the transformation of Polish society at the local level (Czerska-Shaw, Krzyworzeka-Jelinowska and Mucha 2022).

The migratory inflows are influenced by three main factors particular to Krakow's positioning as a globalising city: (i) the specific structure of the labour market, dominated by the Shared Services Centres and Business Process Outsourcing (SSC/BPO) sector, (ii) tourism and its associated services; and (iii) higher education and science. These three factors influence the level of education and socio-economic positioning of incoming migrants – in 2019, 68.9 per cent of all migrants in Krakow self-declared as having higher education (Pędziwiatr *et al*. 2020). The migration flows are also characterised by their diverse geographies: while the majority of the migration comes from the near periphery – principally from Ukraine but increasingly also from Belarus, encompassing approximately 60 per cent of immigration to Krakow in 2019 – the second largest group encompasses 'core' or command centres within the European Union (approximately 23 per cent) and a small (about 1.5 per cent) amount from North America and Australia. The third, dynamically growing, category of migration flows is noted from what we have termed 'culturally distant' centres often located on the global peripheries, from Asia (11 per cent), as well as South America and Africa (together approximately 5 per cent) (Pędziwiatr *et al*. 2020).

While the local receiving population and businesses have quite quickly developed the tools and social capital with which to cater to foreign populations, particularly tourists, institutional setups are slower to develop and adapt. This is not without attempts to introduce public projects – in order to raise the multicultural competencies of frontline public workers – or tolerance and anti-discrimination programmes for teachers and

intercultural assistants in schools. Between 2016 and 2021, Krakow operated a flagship programme of diversity-minded activities called 'Open Krakow', including awareness-raising campaigns for tolerance and non-discrimination, the building of trust and solidarity between the city's ethnically diverse inhabitants and the raising of the intercultural and linguistic competencies of civil servants working in public administration. In 2020, the city launched a public tender to open and operate a multicultural centre in conjunction with an information point for foreigners. It has also dedicated resources for the analysis of migration dynamics and multicultural relations within the urban space – a joint initiative between the city and the Krakow University of Economics in the form of the Multiculturalism and Migration Observatory. Despite these efforts, the city has not yet implemented concrete public policies that would actively seek to break down barriers in the accessing of resources, goods and public services for dynamically changing communities. This is made more complex by the dynamics of metropolitan regionalism, which has shifted from a focus on the efficient delivery of public services in the Fordist-Keynesian period to the contemporary focus on attracting external capital investment and the competitive positioning of city-regions in transnational economic circuits (Brenner 2019).

Methodology

The main aim of this study was to understand the city's resilience to migration pressures by analysing the attitudes of foreign residents in the city towards public services offered in Krakow, to diagnose the most important barriers faced by foreigners when using these services and whether they themselves create alternative self-help information networks to mitigate the challenges faced. For the purposes of this research, we defined foreign residents as those who identify with being a foreign inhabitant in Poland – who may or may not have Polish citizenship but who have spent a significant amount of time outside of the country and who use public services from the perspective of a foreigner. Foreign residents aged 18 or over who had lived in Krakow for at least three months were eligible for the study – for both the survey and the interviews. In the survey we noted five respondents with dual citizenship (Polish-Ukrainian; Polish-French; Polish-American, Polish-Belarusian-Italian) and two Polish nationals who had spent a significant amount of time outside of the country (who had come to Poland as adults). None of the interviewees had Polish citizenship. We use the term migrant in the article when referring to general trends or statistics and foreign residents when referring specifically to our target study group. The research gained approval from the appropriate institutional ethics committee – assuring the anonymisation and coding of respondents' data and their proper storage and use – as well as the informed consent of participants in the research.

The research covered five key areas of public services affecting the quality of life and the process of integration of foreigners living in Krakow: health care, public administration, public education, public transport and culture. While not all of these services are in the remit of municipal authorities (health care and education are the jurisdiction of the state, as are some public administration services – and cultural offers vary), all of these spheres were accessed at the local level by foreign-inhabitant users.

For the purposes of the study, we have categorised three regions from where we drew our interview participants, purposefully relying on social constructions of East–West and cultural proximity/distance divides, using the world-systems theory core–periphery divide as a framework. The first and most significant in terms of migration flows is the 'culturally proximate' region of Eastern Europe beyond the limits of the European Union (Ukraine, Belarus and other post-Soviet states and Slavic language speakers). The second we have categorised as 'culturally distant' regions beyond Europe, largely from the Global South and developing regions in Asia – chiefly India – and countries of South America and the Middle East among them. The last region is largely an imagined categorisation of 'Western countries', including EU member states and North America, which we may term the Global North.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the research: a quantitative computer-assisted survey (n = 291) and qualitative semi-structured online interviews (n = 20) were adapted to the social-distancing regulations of the COVID-19 pandemic. The online survey, disseminated in the first phase of the research and which was available in English, Russian, Polish and Ukrainian, was distributed among various migrant networks and through online forums and social media used by foreign nationals living in Krakow. Respondents who completed the survey came from a total of 56 countries spanning four continents. Of our respondents, 51 per cent belong to the 'culturally proximate' category, 32.6 per cent the 'Western' category and another 16.3 per cent the 'culturally distant' category. These percentages may be considered approximate to the distribution of the immigrant population in Krakow, whilst noting an over-representation of the 'Western' category (by 7 per cent) and the same under-representation of the 'culturally proximate' category. Yet we are aware that this is a limited sample, therefore we do not make claims about the representativeness of the research nor can we generalise our findings beyond the context of the given research at a specific moment in time.

The selection of participants for interviews, made as a follow-up to the online survey, was based on quota sampling. It took into account the representation of several characteristics, wherein the three geographical regions were the mostly evenly represented (6–7 foreign residents per category) and the amount of time spent in Krakow (both short- and long-term residents) were assessed, as were gender, age range and a variety of professions from different socio-economic categories. For the purposes of this article, we limit the variables analysed, focusing on geographical region of origin. A mix of snowball sampling and online recruitment was used to obtain the data sample, which was then coded. In the interviews, we sought respondents' narrations of their experiences of the different types of public service, eliciting both positive and negative evaluations based on their previous experiences of these services in other countries. We asked our participants to share their recommendations for the improvement of these services by assessing the barriers and/or advantages that they experienced as users coming from particular national backgrounds. As we focused only on the evaluation of public services and not the experience of privatised parallel ones (particularly education and health care), the first question in each of the sections (divided into five service categories) was related to the frequency of use of these services. If the participant replied that he or she did not use the service or only very infrequently (once a year or less), a follow-up question was posed to investigate the reasons for the lack of use. Further questions on their experiences were excluded from the survey or the interview scenario. The most frequent answer for the lack of use was that the respondent was in the privatised system.

The citizen-centric approach adopted in this study assumes that policy-makers should be aware of the needs of users (citizens) in order to better understand their expectations, as well as to identify different types of user and the barriers they face in accessing public services. This approach, developed in a World Bank report (2018) entitled *Indicators of Citizen-Centric Public Service Delivery*, was key to formulating the quantitative survey in our research, wherein we identified three spheres which help in the evaluation of public-service delivery from the point of view of the user-citizen-foreigner. Firstly, we analysed perceptions 'at the gates', particularly the access to information about a given public service. In this case the questions in the survey regarded the clarity and accessibility of information about a given public service, as well as the ease of making an appointment and the accessibility of a given institution (for example its opening times).

Secondly, we explored experiences 'through the doors', which refers to the situation once inside a given institution, generally understood as customer service. The questions in the survey focused on the user's satisfaction based on interpersonal interactions: contact with personnel, whether his or her individual situation was taken into consideration, the feeling of safety and comfort, professionalism and empathy of the personnel, as well as equal and fair treatment. In seeking to understand the respondents' subjective understanding of 'equal and fair treatment' from front-line public-sector workers, we purposefully did not use the term 'discrimination' in the quantitative survey or interview questions, as we are not seeking to make claims that

the treatment of our respondents was indeed discriminatory. We may define discrimination as the inequitable treatment of certain individuals or social groups using particular personal traits as an excuse, based on grounds prohibited by law (Bouchard and Taylor 2008: 219). Instead, we framed the questions through a lens of perceptions of biased treatment, using characteristic grounds for discrimination as a guide. This was formulated in the following manner: 'In using public services in the city of Krakow, have you ever experienced any of the following: (1) unfavourable treatment based on skin colour, (2) unfavourable treatment based on ethnicity/nationality, (3) unfavourable treatment based on religion, (4) unfavourable treatment based on a perceived lack of language competencies, (5) unfavourable treatment based on perceived cultural differences – with the option of ticking (6), I have not experienced any form of unfavourable treatment'. In a last stage, 'at the exit' seeks to assess the overall level of satisfaction after having used a given public service, here analysed by the overall perception of the quality of services. The three spheres of evaluation were repeated in the interviews, informing the structure of the findings presented below.

Findings

An overview of satisfaction with the public-services sector in Krakow shows that our participants' overall assessment was quite positive, highlighting an advantageous positionality of Krakow *vis-à-vis* the categories of foreign residents whom it hosts. However, this general assessment needs to be put into context and nuanced in relation to the different origins of users and their positioning *vis-à-vis* the semi-peripheral location of the city, together with other mediating factors such as skin colour, religion and ethnicity. As Van Ryzin and Immerwahr (2004) point out, satisfaction in some models is measured as the difference between expectations and the experience of the given service, therefore a high assessment may be the result of quite low expectations. Additionally, some elements considered to be important by our respondents in the surveys and interviews may not have had a significant effect on their overall evaluation of services (for example, a respondent may highlight the problem of chaotic information about a given service but s/he will nevertheless assess the service positively). When we seek out the nuances in the assessment, based on the stages of experience (at the gates, through the doors, at the exit) and mediating factors such as regions of origin, skin colour and language skills, we are exposed to important differences in both expectations, treatment and socio-cultural perceptions.

At the gates

> *Where can I download the application? It's there. It's just getting there, it's not easy. So people always require the experience of another person. (...) It's about accessibility. It's just the design, the user experience, the design of the website, because the websites are there. The tools are there* (D/M/16).[2]

The above quote encapsulates the confusion felt by our respondents who were trying to access and navigate information about public services – the information is there but it is often incomplete or outdated and it is not clear how to use or interpret it. This first stage of experience was given the worst evaluation by our respondents, although there were significant differences between services: public transportation and culture were very well evaluated, whereas public health care and administrative services were not. These differences are interesting examples of the transition moment of the globalising city. Spheres such as public transportation and culture, critical for the development of the tourist industry, had undergone internationalisation much earlier than other spheres. Additionally, these spheres have partnerships with the private sectors (in the case of public transportation, the popular application '*Jakdojade*', through which one can easily check schedules and buy tickets, makes navigating the city very foreigner-friendly). In this case the scale and the framework of reference

are quite global, whereas the other spheres – namely health, education and public administration – have largely remained dominated by the national scale and framework of reference. This is particularly evident in the linguistic aspect, which is a major barrier 'at the gates', as we discuss below. Culture and public transportation are also largely uncontroversial, whereas health and administration are typically services to which citizens go when they have problems – sometimes of a legal or life-threatening nature – and where expectations may be heightened and vulnerabilities exposed. Additionally, language misunderstandings have far fewer consequences in culture and public transport than in public administration and health care.

Differences in perceptions of the clarity and accessibility of information were noted in the results of the survey, chiefly along the lines of respondents' regions of origin. By way of example, 26 per cent of all respondents from culturally distant regions declared a lack of information on how to use the health-care system, in comparison to 19.5 per cent of respondents from 'Western countries', while only 10 per cent of culturally proximate respondents deemed this to be a problem. Similar results were found elsewhere, for example 20 per cent of culturally distant respondents assessed the access to information on administrative issues as good or very good, in comparison to 28 per cent of those from Western countries and a significant 58 per cent from culturally proximate countries.

Language is a critical barrier to accessing information about public services and may account for some of the differences in perceptions amongst the culturally proximate respondents, who are better equipped linguistically to navigate the Polish language. However, Russian and Ukrainian-speaking respondents also noted language difficulties in official settings, particularly in the spheres of health and public administration, due to difficult technocratic terminology wherein even marginal linguistic mistakes can have far-reaching consequences. This highlights a common assumption that Slavic languages are easily decipherable to speakers of the same language group, which may paradoxically lead to prejudice when those members do not speak the language as well as expected.

For respondents from Western countries, a more-often-cited barrier was the lack of instructions and planning; knowledge about what to do and in what order to do it. While documents may be available, the system in which they operate, together with the thick institutional culture that follows its own logic, remain largely indecipherable to those who are not familiar with them. Navigation through the system is therefore largely privatised, in the form of informal group support networks like online forums, privately hired assistants in bureaucratic matters or private health and educational care or the use of Polish friends and neighbours – the latter who, paradoxically, help to stimulate anchoring processes through the building of social ties.

> *Even when you find the right document, you need extra help in order to fill it out. First you need to understand the whole bureaucratic system and then apply it to your situation, but you know that, even then, you will get stuck and you'll need someone to help you* (W/M/9).

Through the doors

Once through the doors of public institutions, the evaluation of service turns to interpersonal encounters, the subjective feeling of safety and comfort and the perception of equal and fair treatment – or the lack thereof. During the pandemic, this was limited largely to health emergencies, telephone consultations and contact with teachers through online learning. While a number of our respondents had contact with public services at this time, the majority of responses spoke of their experiences before the start of the pandemic.

> *The waiting list is really long. And then when I had the opportunity to submit my application, it was rejected. Because the format is old. And I downloaded the format from their website, like, two days before submitting*

and she just refused to take it. And I was like, okay, maybe I can bring the new one and give it to you today. She said 'No, no, no, make a new appointment'. That's three months from now. So I had to do it again. And then, when I did it again, it was also rejected for some weird reason. And here's the funny thing, because I asked my friend to give me some insight: What did you do? How did it go? There is no consistency. My documents get rejected and his were accepted. And I don't know where I went wrong. It's just total confusion (D/M/7).

As this quote from a respondent from the culturally distant category suggests, there is a perception of chaos in the information given and arbitrariness in the procedures that follow, which were similarly felt amongst culturally distant and Western country respondents. This follows from the *ad hoc* and unclear nature of information given 'at the gates', which then plays out in interpersonal interactions on site. The difference between respondents from Western countries and those from culturally distant countries, particularly visible minorities, were their perceptions and experiences of unfair treatment. The former attributed this different treatment to the arbitrariness of the system itself and largely to language issues, while the latter cited unfavourable treatment due to religion, skin colour and cultural differences. Interestingly, over 25 per cent of respondents from culturally proximate backgrounds indicated unfair treatment due to language barriers and perceptions of unfair treatment due to ethnicity/nationality were the same amongst culturally close and Western respondents (20 per cent), whereas culturally distant respondents noted higher rates of unfavourable treatment based on ethnicity, at 34.8 per cent.

Overall, more than 40 per cent of foreigners living in Krakow experienced some form of unfavourable treatment while using public services. In the majority of cases (34.8 per cent), this had to do with unfair treatment based on language, particularly the lack of Polish language competence amongst respondents. What is significant is that while, overall, only 6.6 per cent of respondents indicated unfair treatment because of skin colour, this percentage rises to 32.6 per cent amongst those from culturally different backgrounds, most often from visible minorities.

As interpersonal exchanges are relational, based on the interpretation of cultural codes as well as relations of power, the positioning and cultural capital of both social actors – the user and the public-service provider – are important in how these encounters are evaluated. In the case of public administration, 80 per cent of culturally close respondents considered the personnel to be polite and helpful, whereas this percentage drops by almost half to 48 per cent amongst Western and culturally distant respondents. There was a particular emphasis placed on the impoliteness of those at reception, including security guards and those who unwittingly become the first points of contact at institutional entrances. As one respondent noted:

I heard from some Brazilian and Argentinian employees that there was this discussion with the lady at the reception, who said 'If you can't speak Polish, why are you living here? What can you expect of a foreigner who came to Poland two months ago?' The man at the reception didn't want to speak in English either, so the employees of our company asked if someone from work could come with them (P/F/5).

Such instances highlight a number of issues: firstly, the lack of training and intercultural competence of frontline staff, whose positions are often undermined, badly paid and low-qualified; their lack of language competence is not a choice but, rather, a condition. Secondly, the modes of behaviour and asymmetries of power within these institutions are often perceived negatively by foreign nationals, particularly from Western and culturally distant spheres, who may not share the institutional knowledge of post-communist systems and who come with different expectations of service provision.

In the in-depth interviews, respondents from Western and culturally distant regions often noted what they perceived to be abuses of power on the part of administrative personnel and frontline reception workers in the health service. The sensitivity to the perceived abuse of institutional power seemed particularly relevant to those respondents who came from 'customer knows best' cultures institutionalised by Western countries.

> *Sometimes it feels a little bit like they're almost abusing their power, just because they* can *ask for something, they do. Because you don't really know why it is important. So maybe they just ask for them just to be difficult. And to make your life difficult. That might not be the case. But that's how it feels like a bit sometimes if there is no proper justification of why you need to provide those documents* (W/F/9).

Some Western respondents suggested that neo-colonial relations prevailed in the sphere of public services. In their view, the fact that they were treated very well was because they came from a particular region and had a certain appearance, implicitly more civilised and better developed. This asymmetrical advantage typically caused feelings of discomfort in our respondents, who were quick to underscore the disadvantageous position of other non-Western migrants and keen to emphasise their satisfaction with services – possibly in order not to fall into the asymmetric power-relations trap set out for them.

> *As a young white German woman with good Polish, I was usually treated very well by officials, who were not so kind to non-EU immigrants. I found the experience of the public administration especially positive in comparison with the German bureaucracy* (W/F/1-5).

According to the quantitative results of the study, the perception of politeness of service-providers further declines over time spent in the city, which may be surprising from an integration point of view as, with time, one builds up cultural and linguistic competencies that may mediate these barriers. One interpretation of this result could be attributed to the fact that, with time, one has to frequent more and different public services, especially those which have been the least internationalised. Another interpretation points to the consistently higher expectations of users, particularly those from systems closer to the global centre, in which Poland and Krakow are in a position of needing to 'catch up' with expectations. After the honeymoon period of cultural curiosity is over, higher expectations may come to the fore.

It is worth highlighting that the positive experiences that some respondents noted, particularly in the interviews, were the consequence of systemic and institutional gaps in catering to foreign nationals. In their responses, our interviewees often noted that they 'had been lost' in the system and that someone from the personnel 'took pity on them' or 'rescued them' from a difficult situation, on a completely *ad hoc* and accidental basis. They would do this in their own time, 'outside of the system'. One respondent tells of his experience:

> *She was like 'You should speak Polish'. And she refused to help me. I sat down and thought 'So what happens now?' And then her friend, colleague, finished her work. And then she said, 'Okay, I speak English. What's going on?' And she kind of saved me* (D/M/7).

This may be seen as a luxury for a globalising city – the relatively small scale of foreigners seeking to use public services allows for an unsystematised approach to support, based on pockets of personnel with heightened intercultural awareness and competencies. These pockets of luck may also have a significant impact on a person's overall evaluation of a service, which makes him or her feel unique and particularly catered to, even though (or because) that care has not been systematised.

At the exit

This stage was quite well evaluated by our respondents: general satisfaction with the quality of services across all sectors was higher than 55 per cent, although there were significant differences between sectors. The health-care services were the lowest ranked (56 per cent positive reviews), whereas public transportation was the highest at 90 per cent satisfaction. As noted earlier, the expectations of users of public services are contextual: satisfaction is measured as the distance between expectations and experience, therefore a high rate of satisfaction may be the result of lower expectations. Additionally, certain aspects that were underscored as important in the survey and interviews turned out not to have a significant impact on the overall satisfaction. For example, respondents often noted the *ad hoc* nature of information given and incomprehensible logic of the system but because, in the end, they attained their goal and completed their bureaucratic matters, even though it may have been with the help of a Polish friend, they evaluated the service positively.

In terms of overall satisfaction with administrative services, 74 per cent of culturally proximate respondents claimed to be very satisfied or satisfied with the services, whereas this percentage drops to 39.5 per cent in the case of Western regions and 36.6 per cent for culturally distant respondents. These differences were often repeated in interviews, where it transpired that one of the most important expectations of culturally close respondents was a lack of corruption in public administration. As this expectation was fulfilled, the general satisfaction was high. This factor was not mentioned at all by Western respondents, pointing to the differences in expectations between these two groups. A topic of discussion amongst respondents from Western countries was the cultural differences that influenced their evaluation of the given services. As a citizen from the ‘Western’ category explained:

> *Overall, the administrative services are good, professional. But cultural differences are felt in the details. My first experience with registering my stay was my surprise at the number of documents I had to fill out and the person who was attending to me wasn't very helpful, a totally different experience than with doctors. There was some kind of unwillingness to help, which was hard for me to understand. (...) In the UK, the procedures are simple and, if they're complicated, someone will always explain exactly what you have to do. Whereas here you have to ask for it especially, which was strange to me* (W/M/7).

Interestingly, we noted somewhat lower levels of satisfaction amongst culturally proximate respondents *vis-à-vis* the health-care system in comparison to culturally distant and Western regions. While these evaluations are highly contextual and based on personal experience and level of health and emergency, a point made in the interviews sheds light on the anomaly in the responses from culturally close interviewees. Health-care systems in these countries are more intensively privatised than in Poland and this may have an effect on the expectations thereof.

In the public-education sector, the overall satisfaction was quite positive: more than 60 per cent were satisfied with the provision, wherein issues of safety came out very positively, although the level of teaching was clearly the lowest point, as was also criticised in the in-depth interviews. On the one hand there was a sense that children are given too much work and not enough play and, on the other, that the curriculum was not adequate enough to provide tools with which to tackle contemporary global challenges. This opinion was expressed by a respondent from the Western sphere:

> *In my opinion kids spend too long at school, they have too much homework and too many exams. I have the feeling that kids are really tired by the end of the week and this is not that healthy for them. Added to that, kids need to learn a lot of useless facts, which they do not analyse; there is a lack of a more critical*

> *approach, for example, when it comes to history – they learn about dates and facts instead of learning about the processes* (W/M/7).

The typical distinction between 'Western' and 'Eastern' notions of education come out here, whereby Western curricula are perceived to be more critical and analytical and based on learning through games and creativity, whereas Eastern systems are thought to involve more learning by rote and be more passive and highly disciplined. Expectations clearly differed here amongst respondents and were a significant deciding factor in whether or not children would be sent to private schools.

In the case of the sphere of public education, we also observe an interesting correlation. The system of public education in Poland has a dual character. The curriculum is prepared at the state level (Ministry of Education), whereas organisational aspects such as the employment of teachers etc. are the responsibility of the local government. Educational reforms since 2015 have not managed to break away from the traditional forms of teaching and learning, putting special attention on ethnic and religious homogeneity in the curriculum, which does not meet the requirements of a multicultural and globalising city. Our respondents often criticised the curriculum while praising the quite respectful, individual approaches of teachers and schools. By way of example, a respondent from Turkey, whose son is the only Muslim in his primary school, noted:

> *When my son was in the first grade we informed* [the school] *that we are Muslims and that he doesn't eat pork and it is always respected, he is always informed which food contains pork and which does not and he can eat it. So this is very good* (D/F/7).

Finally, it is worth noting the overwhelmingly positive evaluation of public transport in Krakow by all respondents, with little to no differences between regions of origin. Additionally, Krakow is a beneficiary of EU structural funds, its infrastructure having been consistently updated and internationalised – and priority lanes for buses make public transport attractive and efficient. As one respondent from the culturally distant category exclaimed:

> *Yeah, it is a cultural shock. It's like, wow, this is great. What time is it* [the bus] *supposed to be here? 7:26. It's 7:25 and counting and the bus is about to arrive to the bus stop. That's pretty amazing* (D/M/16).

Discussion

Krakow on the eve of the large-scale refugee flows from Ukraine – a regional metropolis, 'second city' (Hodos 2007) and major European outsourcing centre, as well as a hub for students, culture and tourism – could be considered a city in the phase of a 'sweet spot' of globalisation on the semi-peripheries of European centres. This means the lower expectations of foreign residents, an unsaturated and attractive labour market and a relatively high quality of public services. The migration transition that has occurred since the mid-2010s has dynamically transformed the urban fabric, attracting a majority of highly skilled professionals as well as low- and semi-skilled labour and students from the non-EU 'culturally proximate' neighbourhood (primarily Ukraine), high-skilled migrants from 'Western countries', as well as highly and semi-skilled migrants from semi-peripheral regions categorised here as 'culturally distant'. This provides the backdrop to the challenge of building a new urban resilience in the face of the dynamic challenges facing the city on account of the unprecedented forced migration flows after February 2022.

The differing expectations and perceptions of public services and the evaluation of these experiences may shed some light on the gaps in service provision and institutional frameworks catering to international users which are

exposed in the process of 'gaining globality'. It also allows us to analyse the shifting positionality of Krakow *vis-à-vis* its migrant populations, the diverse expectations that need to be taken into account in public-service provision and the privatised support systems that build up alongside it. What emerges is a multi-faceted view of the dynamics of the globalising city on the semi-periphery, as shaped and negotiated by migrant populations from proximate and distant semi-peripheries, as well as from 'core' regions with high symbolic capital.

Firstly, we gain a view from the 'West' – so-called expats: highly skilled workers, students mostly from Western Europe including some from North America, small entrepreneurs and those working in the creative sector. In this group of respondents we noted the presence of 'lifestyle' migration, tied to lowered professional expectations but the active seeking of human-sized cities that offer cultural outlets and community structures aimed at a 'work–life' balance lifestyle (Benson and O'Reilly 2009). For this group, the quality of interpersonal exchanges in public-service provision became a key to this experience: expectations of customer service and 'pleasantness' were high, as well as easy-to-access and clear instructions – also in English and other languages – regarding public services. In both these spheres, the evaluation of experiences was low, revealing the expectations –reality gap and institutional cultures that significantly differ from practices in 'Western' systems. The emblematic question of 'Why don't they just smile a bit more?' reflects the vision of 'greyness' that has been long connected to the stereotype of Eastern Europe as 'a grey place' (Müller 2020).

Yet the overall evaluation of public services was modestly positive, which may be due to the high rates of privatisation amongst this group – particularly in health care and education – and the relatively positive attitudes towards Western migrants amongst the Polish population and their privileged status coming from the 'core', which allows for a feeling of preferential treatment and the interpretation of Polish bureaucracy as something of a cultural curiosity. As this migration is often selective and the result of family or friendship ties, the support of cultural translators was often cited as present and exploited. 'No one does it by themselves' also means that this category of foreign resident was characterised by high social capital in the form of Polish or 'local' friends and family. This becomes an important factor stimulating the process of anchoring migrants in local neighbourhoods: in order to understand the system culturally, it is necessary to have access to cultural translators – or so-called 'natives'.

The second view which we are afforded is from culturally proximate 'neighbours' from the (outer) periphery – notably Ukrainian migrants (accounting for approximately 60 per cent of all migration to Krakow before the outbreak of war in Ukraine), as well as Belarusians and, to a lesser extent, Georgians, Russians and those from other Eastern European countries. This group was characterised by their relative linguistic and cultural proximity as well as their experience and understanding of post-communist institutional systems. However, the latter carries with it a legacy of low trust in institutions, which is somewhat characteristic of post-communist regions (Sztompka 1999), which also brings with it negative attitudes and lowered expectations. This was evident in the responses from our interviewees, who most often cited the lack of corruption as the most important marker of their satisfaction. This low threshold of expectations allowed for a higher overall satisfaction amongst this group, although experiences of prejudiced attitudes come to the fore. The experiences and attitudes of and towards this particular category of migrants – both forced and voluntary – will invariably see dynamic changes in the years to come. This is due to the rapidly increased population of this group and its internal systems of support, as well as the differentiated access to public services experienced by those Ukrainian nationals who came before the war and those who came after the outbreak – the latter who may be perceived as experiencing preferential treatment due to their protected status.

Finally, the view from the least-known but rapidly increasing category of migrants from 'culturally distant' regions, such as India, Turkey, Vietnam, Brazil and Mexico – employees of multinational corporations, small-scale entrepreneurs and students – brings to light the distance between their expectations and the realities in institutional practices and set-ups. Our respondents often had no prior imaginary of Poland and therefore

mostly a total absence of expectations, aligning with the positionality of the East as the 'unknowable', an absence of imaginary on the global map (Müller 2020). In many cases this led to pleasant surprises – uncovering public services that work, are mostly efficient and are often better equipped than those of their countries of origin. However, the overall satisfaction was largely tempered by the significant percentage (almost 40 per cent) of people from this category who experienced some form of unfavourable treatment whilst using public services, most notably based on skin colour, ethnicity and religion. Respondents in this category were the only ones to perceive unfair treatment based on cultural differences, which accounts for the thick cultural interpretation necessary to navigate public services. What is interesting about this category is that they sought the help of Polish friends just as readily as other categories of migrants.

In fact, 47.4 per cent of all respondents sought information about public services from Polish friends or neighbours. This figure is 10 percentage points higher than that of those who looked to other foreigners for support, which suggests that bridging social capital – the strength of networks between different ethno-cultural groups – is stronger in this group of respondents than bonding social capital (the strength of networks within a particular group). A factor that is undoubtedly important here is social positioning and level of education, which were generally higher than average amongst our respondents (88 per cent in comparison to 68.9 per cent in the foreign population). This issue was often highlighted in interviews, wherein participants noted the help which they received from Polish friends in accessing information and navigating public services in the city.

Conclusions

As a globalising city, Krakow has undergone profound social and cultural changes as a consequence of its inclusion in the global space of flows in recent years. Our study aimed to highlight the important role of international migrants in the process of detecting and shaping the resilience of the city, influenced by their own positionality in the global structure of core–periphery and by exerting pressures on and highlighting institutional gaps in public-service provision based on differing expectations and experiences of these services. All three categories of respondents noted low levels of satisfaction across the board with access to information 'at the gates', reflecting often contradictory sources and *ad hoc* barriers to accessing public services. The treatment and experience of services once 'through the doors' were largely contingent on the category of respondent. In this paper we highlighted the differences in treatment based on geographical provenance and the treatment of foreign nationals based on their language competence: those culturally distant respondents noted significantly higher rates of unfair treatment based on ethnicity, religion or skin colour, whereas culturally close respondents paradoxically noted higher levels of unfair treatment based on their lack of language competence. This may be explained by frontline workers' attitudes of 'deservingness': those from culturally close categories ought to know the language therefore, if they do not, they are deemed to be 'undeserving' of positive treatment. Lastly, the evaluation 'at the exit' was moderately positive across all categories of respondents, which may be explained by the relatively small expectations–reality gap that existed in the access to public services at the time. Yet these findings remain at the level of primary diagnosis for future research, particularly the nuanced differences between the various groups of respondents and the lack of analysis of additional variables such as gender, profession and socio-economic positioning, due to the small sample size and dynamically changing character of the positionality of ethno-cultural groups in the present context.

Finally, we have aimed to highlight the uneven transformation and adjustment of five spheres of public service based on these differing expectations – some spheres have undergone a high degree of internationalisation and, to a great extent, meet the requirements of a resilient city, particularly those affected early by the tourist boom (culture) and the injection of EU structural funds (public transportation and, to some

extent, public administration). Some spheres, on the other hand, are dominated by the national scale and framework of reference (health care) or are caught between two scales of influence – namely the national and the municipal frames of reference (public administration, education) – where the gap between expectations and experiences is notably higher. Interestingly, we note a trend towards the development of bottom-up internationalisation, wherein local authorities, in conjunction with or alongside civil society – and increasingly vocal foreign nationals amongst them –are pro-actively undertaking measures to adjust and adapt to the growing expectations and demands on public services by foreign nationals, as well as the opening of the public sphere to diversity in general. This includes funding research and civil-society organisations focused on the inclusion of minorities, which may shed light on other forms of exclusion, including those that are cross-sectional in nature – such as, *inter alia*, ethnic belonging and class, religion and gender. However, further research in this field is required to assess the extent and impact of the changes that are taking place with the intensive activation of civil society and rights-based claims on behalf of migrant communities, which have seen a radical transformation in the face of the humanitarian response after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Notes

1. Estimating the total number of foreigners living in Krakow is notoriously difficult. Firstly, we are dealing with a very dynamic phenomenon, which is also significantly determined by the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, the official data on foreigners living in Krakow differs significantly from one database to another. According to data from the City Hall, 14,300 foreigners were registered in the city in 2020 whereas, according to the Social Insurance Institution, 35,400 foreigners paid social insurance in Krakow in the same year. Finally, according to the Malopolska Regional Office, 41,100 foreigners resided in Krakow in 2020 (see Pędziwiatr *et al*. 2020).
2. The interview data are coded as follows: geographical category (W = 'Western', P = culturally proximate, D = culturally distant) / male (M) or female (F) / number of years in Krakow – for example W/M/2.

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When Distrust Meets Hope: Georgian Migrant Women in Greece

Weronika Zmiejewski*, Florian Mühlfried**

For many women situated in post-socialist countries, the end of communism entailed the loss of state protection and social security. This often resulted in migration, underpinned by the hope for a better future and facilitated by trust in social networks. Trust and hope are often highlighted in the social-science literature as being indispensable means for navigating migration. What this perspective lacks, however, is an eye for the detrimental effects of the work of hope and for the beneficial effects of the work of distrust. For it can be hope that relates a subject to its exploiter and/or exploitative circumstances and it can be distrust that provides an escape route and increases agency. This article considers the illusive dimension of hope and the mobilising effect of distrust by referring to the experiences of Georgian migrant women in Thessaloniki (Greece). It shows how hope occasionally emanates out of distrust and how the combination of the two allows for new perspectives of action.

Keywords: hope, distrust, migration, Greece, Caucasus

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Introduction

For many women situated in post-socialist countries, the end of communism entailed the loss of 'state protection and the security they had enjoyed as working women and mothers under communism' and marked the 'beginning of poverty and dispersal' and a rising sense of insecurity (Michail and Christou 2016: 68–69). Such states of insecurity are difficult to maintain; they often result in depression and paralysis although they also accelerate strategies that result in migration, underpinned by the hope for a better future (Kleist 2017). Hope makes migration endurable for those many migrants who count on the positive future effects of their remittances (Lianos and Pseiridis 2014). It is often the hope of a better future for their children (Pine 2014) that is cited as a decisive reason for moving abroad – which is why remittances are effectively higher when they are used for the education of children (Lianos and Pseiridis 2014). If such hope does not exist, women in particular are less likely to migrate. Others hope to secure upward mobility (Hage 2003) or a 'normal life' (Jansen 2015) by the means of migration.

Some sociologists, psychologists and political scientists have argued that, in addition to hope, another affective competence is needed for navigating the vagaries that go along with migration: trust. It takes trust in one's networks (Tilly 2007) and, to a certain extent, trust in brokers (Alpes 2017), to be able to embark on the risky endeavour that is migration. Others argue that trust fosters the social cohesion of migrants (Flores-Yeffal 2013), contributes to their emancipation (Bilgic 2013) and facilitates their integration in the new society (Korzeniewska, Bivand Erdal, Kosakowska-Berezecka and Żadkowska 2019; Reinhardt 2015). These arguments reflect the more general statements that frame trust as the glue of society (Simmel 1950: 318–319) and as a prerequisite for a good and successful life (Fukuyama 1995; Sztompka 2019). Distrust, on the contrary, allegedly fragments migrants' solidarity (Guarnizo, Sánchez and Roach 1999), fosters hostility both among them and towards them (da Silva Rebelo, Fernández and Meneses 2020), and is an obstacle to the integration of refugees (Daniel and Knudsen 1995; Lenette 2013). Distrust is also said to hamper 'democratic transition in post-communist Europe' (Marková 2004). Anthropology has thus far been conspicuously absent from the investigation of the social life of distrust in migration, let alone in a post-socialist context.

Trust and hope are not isolated modes of coping with insecurity (in migration and elsewhere) but deeply intertwined. It takes trust in oneself and one's surroundings to be able to imagine a better future – and thus to hope (Liisberg, Pedersen and Dalsgård 2015). Both aspects play a significant role in migration; trust is part of a strategy of adaptation to new surroundings and hope is directed towards the benefits of one's work. What this perspective lacks, however, is 'an eye for potential detrimental effects of the work of hope' (Jansen 2021: 14) and for the potential beneficial effects of the work of distrust, for example in situations of migration. For it can be hope that relates a subject to its exploiter and/or exploitative circumstances and it can be distrust that provides an escape route. This, at least, is what we intend to illustrate in this article. The aim of this endeavour is twofold. On the one hand, we mean to contribute to the emergence of the 'burgeoning subfield around the anthropology of hope' and its role in migration (Jansen 2021: 1). On the other hand, we intend to add to the still few and only very recent ethnographic investigations of distrust (e.g. Carey 2017; Humphrey 2018; Mühlfried 2019) and introduce this notion into discussions of migration.[1]

In ethnographic investigations of distrust, the latter is decentred from its alleged constitutive counterpart – namely trust – and treated as a quality *per se*. Further on, normative assumptions regarding its assumed detrimental effect on individuals and societies are at least temporarily suspended in order to give way to empirical investigations. Following this approach, the authors mentioned above would probably agree that, in the words of Humphrey (2018: 9–10), distrust 'can be socially productive'. Examples of the social productivity of distrust range from its potential to foster trans-border relations (Humphrey 2018), to undermine the perpetuation of political power (Carey 2017) or to domesticate a stranger through the rules of hospitality

(Mühlfried 2019). The problematic part of Humphrey's above-mentioned statement is the word 'can' as, in some instances, distrust can also have a paralysing or socially destructive effect. This is why Humphrey, in reference to Diego Gambetta's (1988) seminal book on trust, advocates 'the idea that distrust (…) can be understood as a range, varying from 'hard' (paralysing) distrust to 'prudent' distrust that allows for certain interactions' (1988: 14). However, the question remains: What exactly is it that either channels distrust into a form of 'socially productive' engagement or into a paralysing and non-productive form of despair? When, why and how does distrust widen or minimise the scope of agency, for example, in the case of migrants?

Agenda

The following is an attempt to approach the question of how distrust relates to agency and how it impacts regimes of hope in the context of migration. We do this by referring to the experience of Georgian migrant women in Thessaloniki (Greece) who mostly work in the care sector. As with other migrant women in Greece, the on-going economic crisis has further undermined their already atomised and vulnerable status (Psimmenos 2017; Xypolitas, Vassilikou and Fouskas 2017). Among these women, distrust of the political and administrative system, the brokers who mediated their working places, the households they work in, as well as a good portion of their fellow Georgians in Thessaloniki, is so widespread that it is an essential part of their migratory experience. For some women, this omnipresent distrust wears them out and takes away all their joy, fostering depression and inactivity. For others, however, distrust increases their agency – namely when distrust leads to a critical revaluation of people and circumstances that have previously been trusted and to an eventual disentanglement from these unhealthy relationships. It is this transitory movement from trust to distrust, we argue, that opens up a space for hope. For hope to emanate in this constellation, however, distrust needs to be backed by trust in one's resources (Zmiejewski 2020).

In the process of unfolding this argument, we understand both 'hope' and 'distrust' as generalised, gendered and culturally specific ways for Georgian women to perceive their relationships, ranging from those with the state and their employers to those with their compatriots, husbands and children. In certain situations, the one is enacted to process the other; in this vein, 'hope' represents a culturally specific way of dealing with 'distrust' and *vice versa*. It is this entanglement of hope and distrust which is in the foreground here.

Context of the research and methodological note

In order to show the mutual constitution of distrust and hope, we elaborate on the life trajectories of Georgian migrant women in Thessaloniki who were trying to escape the 'big crisis' triggered by the breakdown of the Soviet Union and a civil war that severely deteriorated their living conditions in Georgia and hampered their prospects as well as those of their children. In this situation, the prevailing number of these labour migrants lost their confidence in the Georgian government and state, when virtually all institutions were deficient and only powerful connections or money could provide one with access to even rudimentary services. The years of the 'big crisis' in the 1990s in Georgia were marked by loss in many senses. For migrant women, it was the loss of protection (*p'at'ronoba*), which meant losing their social, physical and ontological security, as state institutions that formerly guaranteed protection in Soviet times failed to do so. Statements like 'since those times I could not put my heart into anything' – which are frequently expressed by migrant women – represent the lasting traumatic impact of this period. Their dismissive attitude towards the proliferation of radical insecurities that developed in the years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union – years which, for most migrant women, brought about a fundamental loss of credibility, hope and trust – led to a self-perceived incapacity to trust, as coined in the Georgian phrase *ver vendobi* ('I cannot trust'). Expressed by the modal

verb *ver* (cannot), this phrase indicates relations where trust is hoped for or expected but is impossible to develop.

In addition to distrust in the political and social surroundings, most Georgian migrant women to Greece were also driven by a strongly articulated distrust in the capacity of their husbands and/or sons to effectively navigate the difficult situation. More than that, some women were essentially trying to escape the revitalised patriarchal norms within Georgian society that significantly limited their scope by relocating them to the realm of the household and narrowing their access to the formal labour market. The kind of experiences that migrant women had in Georgia made a significant impact on the ways in which they encountered the new, equally distrusted world. It is the rebirth of hope in an environment of distrust, then, which is at stake here.

The case material stems from 8 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Thessaloniki among Georgian migrant women, conducted by one of the authors, namely Weronika Zmiejewski, and is centred on the narratives of 50 middle- and older-aged Georgian migrant women who were educated in Soviet Georgia.[2] The semi-structured interviews were mostly conducted in Thessaloniki, with several others in Georgia, on the basis of snowball sampling. Most were held in Georgian and a few in Russian. Looking at the profiles of the informants, the majority of the female interviewees had been working as care-workers or cleaners in Greece for more than two years and were mothers and, in some cases, already grandmothers. Though around half of the informants had a documented status during their stay in Greece, all of the interviewed migrant women experienced times in migration without such a status. Data were also collected through participant observation – e.g. when visiting migrant women at their workplaces or accompanying them on their daily routines in Thessaloniki. The interviewees were informed about the research aims, methods and use of the qualitative data, and guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. Furthermore, the data have been treated in ways that guarantee the safety of the interviewees.[3]

Thessaloniki, as the second largest city in Greece, became a hub for post-Soviet migrants by the end of the 1990s, spurred on by the inflow of thousands of ethnic Greeks from former Soviet Georgia to Greece after the fall of the Soviet Union. The economic boom of the 1980s and 1990s created a strong demand for labour in Greece that was partially met by Greek women who were increasingly entering the official labour market. This, in turn, created a demand for work in the home-care sector to be filled with female workers from abroad. For many women in Georgia who had suffered from the socio-economic hardships of the 1990s, this demand for labour came at exactly the right time, since the former most popular target country for migration, the Russian Federation, became almost inaccessible to Georgian migrants due to the worsening political climate between the two countries and the concomitant restrictive migration regulations *vis-à-vis* Georgian citizens in the Russian Federation. Further on, migration to Greece was facilitated by the social relations which many Georgians had created during the Soviet period with members of the Greek community in Georgia. As most of the ethnic Greeks from Georgia had settled in Greece in the 1990s, they could be approached as intermediaries for migration. At the end of the last century, Greece thus became one of the main target countries for Georgian migrant women, despite the immense obstacles they faced in documenting their status, owing to the conditions of their employment in the domestic branch (Maroufof 2015).

The stream of Georgian female migrants to Greece steadily intensified from the beginning of the new millennium until 2012 (Hofmann 2012), when the economic crisis and recession deprived the Greek middle and higher class of its economic resources. To the present day, women from Georgia are mostly engaged in informal domestic services in Greece, with care for the elderly, babysitting, housekeeping and cleaning as the main tasks. Even if they manage to regulate their stay, they only have access to a temporal residence that nevertheless legalises their work relations. Despite the harsh effects of the Greek economic crisis, thousands of Georgian women – many without documented status in any shape or form – carried on working in the Greek domestic sector during the time of the fieldwork in 2015.

The following sections begin with the life histories of two Georgian migrant women who were working in different branches in Thessaloniki without a documented status[4] at the time when the fieldwork was conducted. We focus on these two life stories, as they are not only paradigmatic for the biographies of our interviewees, but also represent exemplary ways of dealing with the experience of distrust in migration. The first is Nino who, in the course of migration, came to distrust those who offered support and help when she first arrived in Thessaloniki.[5] The process initiated by this distrust was a painful one; it ended with a radical break with her former patrons that opened up pathways for a new future and thus allowed her to hope again. The second woman is Tamar, who had been deeply disappointed in her husband and her son, whom she neither trusted to enhance the economic situation of the family nor to take responsibility for their own lives.

Looking for protection

In the post-socialist period, household units adapted new economic strategies in which women, in particular, played a key role by establishing diverse care-networks (Pine 1995; Sumbadze 2008). Within this process, the ‘extension of existing kin-based, inter-household divisions of labour’ was decisive (Pine 1995: 57), as it reached beyond national borders and thus enabled women to leave for migration. At a certain stage of life – mostly before migration – the support of certain kin members of the network played a crucial role for all the women met in Thessaloniki, e.g. in regards to the search for a job, to financial sustenance or to assistance in organising a documented status. These ties fundamentally impacted on the migratory trajectory.

Nino arrived in Thessaloniki in 2008 on a three-month tourist visa. Like thousands of other Georgian migrant women in Greece, she entered the country before the European Council adopted a regulation on visa liberalisation for Georgians travelling to the EU in 2017. Having left Georgia, her husband and their two teenage daughters for the first time in her life, Nino was met by her affinal relatives who had come to Thessaloniki with the first wave of mainly Georgian Greeks shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union. Since this related couple could claim Greek origins, they had legalised their stay and thus had established their small business in Thessaloniki. Nino, who did not know anyone else apart from these relatives and had no Greek language skills, agreed to help out with cleaning and cooking in their bistro and thus to get under the patronage of her relatives. For kinship members (here the couple), acting as the patrons ensures the return of their patronage (Turaeva 2016). In the context of migration, structural imbalances between kinship members due to differences in status (e.g. regarding the possession of a residence permit or citizenship), unequal access to resources and the general vulnerability of the newcomers lead to the overlapping of patronage and kin relations (Turaeva 2016). Thus, when confronted with very difficult socio-economic conditions, accepting the role of the client in kinship relations becomes an existential strategy (Murphy 2016).

After several months of consolidating the clientelist relationship, the couple organised additional informal cleaning jobs for Nino, who had overstayed her visa, so she could start to remit money to her family in Georgia; they also offered her housing and assistance in obtaining a residence permit as well as raised her hopes of accumulating capital, a circumstance that made her prone to providing care-work and unpaid labour. Since, for Nino, as for all the interviewed middle- and older-aged migrant women, migration is about earning money as fast as possible.

As the situation in Greece worsened with the onset of the Greek crisis, the couple offered Nino the option of marrying an older Georgian-Greek man with whom they were acquainted in order to obtain a Greek residence permit and thus access to formal cleaning occupations. Nino, though married in Georgia for 19 years, agreed. As the Greek crisis shut down cleaning jobs in private houses, she did not want to work in elderly care – the most accessible niche for undocumented migrant workers. Nino divorced her husband in Georgia for the sole purpose of getting legally married in Greece (and without breaking off her relationship with him).

Although officially married for the second time, she continued to live with the couple for the next three years. When the Greek authorities contested the marriage, Nino had to spend her savings from her recent years of work in order to pay for a lawyer the couple had found for her and for the appeal.

In spring 2015, Nino was still living with the couple. Though the juridical process was not completed, she had a temporary residence permit and could work as a cleaner in cafés. She had only a little time to meet, as at night she would clean cafés and during the day would have to sleep a little and then help out in the bistro and in the couple's house. Most of her free time she dedicated to the well-being of the couple and their children, stressing the importance of her relatives' care (*p'at'ronoba*, literally: patronage, implying protection) as an economic necessity. A year later, however, she had resigned from her work in the bistro and painfully separated from her relatives, explaining this process as follows:

> *When I arrived here, I thought they should help me since I am from the same village and we are family members. I totally entrusted myself to Vazha and Tsitsi* [the couple] *as I did not know anything about anything here in Greece – I thought there was no other choice. I did whatever they told me; I was so naïve. As they helped me, I sacrificed myself by working for them. And not only for them. I tried to save every cent and send the money back to my daughters but now all this belongs in the past.*

Engaging in a trust relationship with the couple who promised protection, information and labour made her highly dependent on the trust-givers and vulnerable to exploitation – especially as the relatives were also the providers of brokerage. Nino continued:

> *When I lived with them* [the couple]*, I had nothing, no house back in Georgia,*[6] *no capital. I still do not have anything. But living with them I could avoid working with the elderly. This I just can't do. Though I was sceptical about everything they did, how they lived and how they behaved towards others* [Georgians] *in Thessaloniki, I hoped so much that by staying with them, my condition would change. They promised me that, so I followed all their instructions, without question.*

The authoritarian position of migrant brokers is accepted by most migrants due to their vulnerable position in the new place, but not only. As Vammen (2017) rightly observed, the mediation and support that the brokers provide also trigger migrants' hopes by 'producing ideas of potential futures that drive migrants' trajectories beyond structural constraints' (2017: 43). This side effect of brokerage, which had been overlooked in scholarship on migration (2017: 43) is important for understanding why Nino was attached to her hopes for such
a long time. This observation supports a more general point made by Crapanzano (2004) in which, in contrast to a desire, hope entails a passive mode as it depends on circumstances and other actors. Although Zigon (2009) agrees with Crapanzano on the 'background attitude of preserving hope through the everyday routines' (2009: 268), he disagrees in regards to locating hope outside of the active realm. Based on his own research, Zigon instead defines hope as 'the temporal orientation of intentional and ethical action' (2009: 254).

Though Nino's hope depended on external agents, she continued to hope for the positive effects of being good and working hard. In Nino's words, 'I sacrificed myself by working for them', with this 'sacrifice' seemingly serving as the only way to cope with very depressing circumstances. Here, again, hope is essential for negotiating insecurity and undertaking a migration project (cf. Kleist and Thorsen 2017). The interplay of hope and uncertainty encourages migrants to actively engage with precariousness in positive anticipation (Hernández-Carretero 2017: 113).

Looking at the interplay of insecurity, uncertainty and hope is crucial for understanding Nino's endurance and actions directed towards the fulfilment of her 'precarious hope' (Parla 2019: 177). The initial stage is the most uncertain in the whole migration project, as migrant women lack languages skills and social networks in the new destination, are mostly indebted and, therefore, are in urgent need of earning money as fast as possible. As Nino said in retrospect:

> *I preserved hope (*imedi*) for a reward for my labour. I tried to be good, always good to them. Though I was sad, I could not show my sadness. I felt under pressure and control all the time, since they cared for me. I knew that their world was not my world. Still, I endured all this with the hope that, by giving up my life, I could make a better life for my children.*

This indicates that hope is sustained by the idea of 'existential reciprocity', implying a strong belief in reward for the sacrifice made (Lucht 2017: 154). In the migration context, the reward very often implies 'successful children', who gain the capacity to reciprocate the emotional and material care they received. Belief in compensation for sacrifice feeds the hopes of many migrant mothers from the post-socialist realm. In this respect, hope is also rooted in cultural gender perceptions, as apparent in another statement by Nino:

> *Everything I learned in childhood was a big mistake. One should know about pain and things that can happen. Somehow everything in my childhood was told in an idealistic way – how to behave as a woman,* kalivit *(womanlike), how to think and act as a woman. This was all a big lie. But somehow this is still part of my self. Maybe because of this idealistic worldview, I have preserved hope and dreams inside of me.*

This statement identifies a central characteristic or prerequisite of hope: past experiences that set the venue for the creation of expectations guiding present aspirations and hopes (Narotzky and Besnier 2014). Nino takes a critical stance towards her past – more precisely the way in which she was educated, raised and socialised back in Georgia – because her childhood and youth did not prepare her for the hard years of transition in Georgia and even harder years in migration, when she needed to face an unimaginable reality. Her morality is rooted in (consciously reflected) idealised perceptions of the then-existing socialist reality, which predefined women's habitus and rules of conduct. Behaving in a 'womanlike' (*kalivit)* manner meant to comply both with the role of working mothers participating in Soviet society through labour and with the role of women as bearers of the nations (Ashwin 2000), including the responsibilities of motherhood (Barkaia 2018), engendering the image of a self-sacrificing woman (Lundkvist-Houndoumadi 2010). Incorporating these two roles nurtured Nino's hopes for reward and a stable life. Hence, Nino's deep hope could be seen as being grounded in a utopian ideology, one that promised a better future (Pine 2014).

Developing distrust

After Nino had gone through a period of mental hardship, she finally dared to listen to the rising sense of distrust of her relatives. When Nino consequentially asked to have direct access to resources, hence a share in the business, this claim caused a conflict. From the point of view of the relatives, Nino disregarded the support, shelter and family ties as appropriate return favours for her labour. The difference in status and power between Nino – the newcomer – and the couple – the established migrants – contributed to the conflict over resources. Distrust was thus needed in order for Nino to change her personal circumstances in migration, despite her vulnerability as the one with fewer resources. She explained it this way:

How long should I have stayed dependent? I felt so dependent on them – the papers, the house, the life. But then so many little things happened – little things again and again and again. I said things in a careful way but no one listened to me. They even did not notice how much I have drudged for them these last years.

According to Nino's explanation, it was not a sudden event that switched her mind into a mode of distrust but a process initiated by suspicion. Once the suspicion was present, it only needed a little push to cross the 'threshold' (Luhmann 2014 [1968]: 84–85) of replacing trust with distrust. This push emanated from Nino's realisation that her relatives were effectively exploiting her. In a sudden fit of anger, she asked for direct access to resources, i.e., a salary for the hours she worked in the bistro. This demand caused a major conflict where all involved in the relationship started to highlight their commitment and the concomitant sacrifice (care, protection, family life). Consequentially, Nino moved to a little apartment belonging to a friend and cut off all links with her relatives.

Within this process, she managed to disentangle herself from the previously demanded unconditional loyalty that made her prone to exploitation. She dared to become *up'at'rono* (without patronage) and thus to accept the vulnerability of being without protection (the juridical process of her status was still not completed) which, for Nino, meant to gain freedom (*tavisupleba*, literally: self-right). In retrospect, Nino realised that, like all the other migrant women whom she met, she yearned for protection and because of this was willing to behave loyally to those who provided it. Loyalty towards the providers of protection does not necessarily indicate a general and internalised acceptance of status differences, however. Showing weakness and vulnerability is a means of receiving protection.

Distrust gave Nino the power to step out of her asymmetric relationships and finally enabled her to look for new, more equal ones. Though, often, distrust is triggered by the unfamiliar and strange, in this particular case it was, instead, ignited by familiarity with circumstances that are only too well known. In migration, women have often blamed other compatriots for misusing cultural proximity to justify exploitation and to legitimise demands by referring to nationally coded principles of honour and kinship tropes. Thus, from Nino's perspective, trusting in the context of migration is dangerous, since it means allowing others (in this case the settled migrants or brokers) to have power over oneself (Raffnsøe 2015).

Frequently used phrases such as 'I have only acquaintances here', 'I do not want a lot of friends', or 'I avoid places where Georgians meet' express migrant women's distrust of their community and a sense of social distance. Instead of breaking these ties, however, migrant women still interact with the people they actually distrust, because life in migration is uncertain. In the words of Davide Torsello (2003: 219), 'Mistrust operates … not as a form of apathy or inactivity, but as an active way of dealing with uncertainty and general conditions of scarcity'. Hence, mistrust does not necessarily lead to cutting off relations but to a certain 'reserved' mode of interaction (Mühlfried 2018: 16). In some cases, when migrant women lose their flats or jobs and urgently need money or support, they have to call on their entire network and call upon individuals with access to services, jobs or other networks, even if they distrust them. Therefore, migrant women often engage in relationships charged with distrust in order to counteract unforeseen eventualities.

Radical, resilient and lost hope

For a long time, Nino had hoped that her commitment to the couple, who had supported her from her very first days in Thessaloniki, would be rewarded. It was this hope that made her endure and accept the obligations and demands within the couple's household. She surrendered to an illusion and, thereby, disregarded the present, underpinning her loyalty for many years. Trust had left her much earlier than hope had but, as Nino emphasised, it was hope (*imedi*) that made her stay with her relatives. The questioning of routinely sacrificing

to kin members in both the migrant community and at home in Georgia constitutes a turning point in migration (Zmiejewski 2020). Why did hope remain when trust in the agents disappeared? For Nino, hope became an anchor that enabled her to continue struggling, because it provided security when trust was fading. Before it did so, hope existed as a Siamese twin of trust, since hope that concerns the immediate life-world is usually 'backed up by some kind of trust in … things being possible to realize' (Pedersen and Liisberg 2015: 1). This momentum of continuous hope, when trust has vanished, discloses the illusive dimension of hope. The hope was also based on values and norms that guarantee some stability and therefore functioned as a coping mechanism when trying to avoid a conflict. In the case presented here, kin relations are involved; a conflict with the related couple could endanger Nino's reputation not only in the migrant community, but also in her social surroundings back in Georgia. Instead of a future orientation, adhering to the illusive hope of a later reward – while, at the same time, no longer trusting her patrons as a prerequisite to gain access to flats and money – becomes a coping strategy aimed at a 'relief from the pressing demands of everyday life' (Bryant and Knight 2019: 153).

Zigon (2009) questioned the utopian dimension that has perpetually been subscribed to hope by the Marxist philosopher Bloch (1996) and anthropologists such as Miyazaki (2003), Turner (2015) and Sliwinski (2016). Based on research in Moscow in the 2000s, Zigon (2009) argues that hopes are not oriented towards utopia but aim at stability and the living of a normal life. Indeed, Georgian migrant women articulated hopes (in the sense of Zigon 2009) but, rather, in regard to the whole migration project; hence from a forward-looking perspective, they also hoped to gain stability and what they perceived as a normal stable life through their struggles in migration. Yet Nino's 'concrete' hope associated with her patron relatives was of a much more short-term, short-lived and illusive nature. When, finally, her hopes began to fade, distrust slid in and impelled Nino towards separation and the consequent start of a vulnerable but new life in migration.

In Nino's relationship with her relatives, hope had vanished and distrust encouraged her to separate. After many years as a migrant, Nino dared to trust in her self-established resources, such as her professional networks and her own abilities; such trust in one's resources and capacities is a precondition for the emancipatory effect of distrust that allowed Nino to separate from her patrons and live her own life. A year after her separation, Nino explained in a conversation how she had slowly recovered from the conflict and made herself feel more comfortable in her own flat and the hitherto unknown and unprotected situation. Finally, the process of distrust made her hope for a different future, a future that before she was not able to anticipate. This hope was radical in the sense that it not only entailed an entirely new direction but also fundamentally affected her presence. Despite the complaints of her relatives in Georgia, Nino separated from her Georgian husband and thus lost her social standing in Georgia. She therefore started to direct her practices and investments towards the hope of a radically different life uncoupled from the patrons and her former as well as current, official husband – be it in Georgia or in Greece. In the light of the continuous political and social vulnerability that Nino faced in migration, turning to and investing in the possibilities of the present expresses the 'radical hope' of subjects (Lear 2008) to overcome the alleged 'right of other actors to define the direction of their active presence' (Kallio *et al*. 2021: 4008). As with Nino, many migrant women gain more self-esteem and more knowledge over the course of time and, although mostly their political status does not change, they manage to detect situations of dependency and thus become more selective in respect to their relationships.

Hopeless distrust

Due to their uncertain status in which migrant women have to cope with plenty of difficulties, many of them search for protection or patronage (*p'at'ronoba*). In the given context, the role of a patron can be taken over by relatives (as in the case of Nino), former neighbours who moved to Greece earlier, friends or acquaintances

from Georgia of ethnic Greek origin, Greek employers and/or other established migrants. When the trust invested in the providers of protection is subverted because it demands everlasting subordination and hampers the cultivation of individual resources, it may turn into distrust and eventually result in the breaking of an established relationship. The process of separation from the target of distrust – here, the former providers of protection – can be an uplifting experience and eventually foster hope, as in the case of Nino. In other words, hope comes into play after successfully disentangling oneself from the centre of distrust, for example by embarking on migration or breaking away from a patron. However, sometimes it does not, as the following example of Tamar illustrates. What does it take, then, for hope to emerge out of distrust and which factors work against such emergence?

Distrusting home

Tamar left Batumi at the most critical moment in her life. It was in 2012 after her grown-up son was taken to hospital. He underwent a very costly surgical procedure, for which Tamar had to mortgage one of her two flats to gain a bank loan. After she was sure that her son would make a full recovery, Tamar decided to migrate. This was the only option that gave her the hope that she would be able to earn the money to pay off the mortgage in the near future and thus would get the flat back. She reached out to all her acquaintances and hoped to get to the USA (which she managed to do a decade later) but, at that time, she was willing to move anywhere that middle-aged or older Georgian women could work – be it Turkey, Italy, Greece or Spain. Until 2014, most migrant women from Georgia worked in Greece.[7] A former neighbour who lived in Thessaloniki offered Tamar some patronage (*p'at'ronoba*) for her migration project. Tamar took out another loan to finance an illicit and dangerous border crossing to Greece and thus entered the country without a documented status. Like most Georgian migrant women, Tamar was already considering migration years before her son's accident, but different obstacles – such as the moral objections that a mother and a wife should stay with her family, as well as economic difficulties to finance the migration process – had deterred her from labouring abroad.

Tamar, like the prevailing number of Georgian migrant women to Greece, lost her confidence in the Georgian government and state during the post-socialist period, when only powerful connections and/or money could provide one with access to rudimentary services. This is how Tamar remembered how distrust entered her life:

> *We lost pretty much everything. Shota* [her husband] *had always worked, but never earned enough for all we needed. He was submissive towards his family, never asking for support or fighting for anything. For a long time, I hoped he would manage to provide us with a normal life. But then, when Levan* [her son] *needed an urgent operation, I noticed again that he was too weak. So, I decided to mortgage our flat and, although I never wanted to, I went to Greece with a great pain in my heart. From that moment on, I distrusted him. I know he wanted the best for us but he never managed to do so, no matter what he promised. So, it was me who had to do something for our future.*

The loss of hope had finally triggered her distrust and encouraged her to leave Georgia. The husband, who was considered to be the primary caretaker of the family, could not cope with the emanating difficulties. Having lost their hope (*imedi*), many migrant women remembered how uncertainties led them to distrust the promises of improvement and fostered their plan to migrate.

Many of them expressed feelings of exposure, as life became unpredictable due to economic and political changes, civil conflicts and partially 'open' borders. When recalling the moment when they decided to leave for Greece, migrant women stressed their urgent need for money and their vulnerable situation in general. The

poverty and unemployment that had burdened most families in post-Soviet Georgia made them dependent on kinship relations.

Every migrant woman interviewed remembered the struggle to ensure the survival of their families and how distrust of the outside world – namely the new political and economic system – was intersecting with their private lives. In the private realm, distrust was initially directed at their husbands' ability (if still alive) to sustain the family and then towards the capacity of the kinship system to provide support for the children. As a way to potentially change those circumstances related to 'hopelessness, despair and acute loss in the present' (Pine 2014: 96), migration becomes an enactment of hope. In precarious living conditions, as Kleist (2017: 13–14) has described it in reference to Hage (2003) and Gaibazzi (2014), it is the existential stuckedness that encourages potential migrants to believe in and imagine a different future through physical escape.

Maintaining distrust

According to Tamar, women in migration compensate for loneliness with mutual socialising. 'Here, in Thessaloniki, we eat each other' is a phrase, which she used to express the relationship between Georgian migrants in Greece. Her statement presupposes that the relationships that migrant women invest in are based on the idea of profit and business rather than emotional attachment. In relation to her Greek employers, Tamar also remained distant and suspicious – a stance that allowed her to protect herself from exploitation. Tamar, who provided 24-hour care for a retired couple, did her work properly and accurately but never more than was demanded; she also avoided becoming part of the family she worked for. She did not believe in the necessity to engage in intimate trust relations. According to Tamar as well as other migrant women working in domestic care work, one is usually distrusted by their employers – so mutual trust is unfounded, at least at the beginning of the employment relationship.

The distrust between Greek employers and their houseworkers is historically rooted. According to Pinelopi Topali (2010), this distrust shaped a certain habitus towards incoming care-workers from the early-twentieth century until now. However, it is a quality that provides the potential for change:

> *The domestic worker-'spy' is gradually transformed into a trustworthy person and finally into a person of the 'house', as soon as she completes the period of her intensive training by the employer and, as a result of this training, gets to develop an almost inherent, 'natural' relationship with the domestic space* (2010: 322).

Thus, a domestic worker has to go through several stages until the initial distrust and the perception of them as a 'spy' is possibly transformed into something else. Looking at domestic workers as a potential threat is both a historical continuity and a reproduction of the current media discourse on migrant domestic workers, which substantiates anxiety and prejudice towards them.[8] Thus, in this particular setting, where relationships are built on oral arrangements that contain risk and insecurity, distrust is socially and culturally embedded and accepted.

The distrust that migrant women articulated during or after migration is also related to the fact that care-workers are generally distrusted by Greek society as well as by the Greek government and media. Experienced migrants who have been in Greece for longer than others, like the couple who provided patronage for Nino, are very much aware of the distrust that incoming migrants are confronted with. They also understand that the newcomers are eager to establish a network as fast as possible in order to process their urgent economic needs. This implies that it is not only sympathy and emotional attachment that motivates them to engage with the newcomers but also a search for profit which, in turn, contributes to the perpetuation of distrust. After passing

through the difficult period of being distrusted, many migrant women establish trust bonds that consequently move towards the familiarisation of the relationship within the workplace which, in turn, offers them protection (*p'at'ronoba*) in respect to legalisation and stable employment.

Tamar maintained her distrust towards her employers throughout the entirety of her migration journey. She did not feel the need to trust, as she relied on the properties she owned in Georgia and her abilities at work. As she noted: 'My flats are my castles, my back, my existence, the most important of what I have'. Having confidence in her own resources, Tamar's distrust made her less vulnerable to exploitation and betrayal. However, the distance that she maintained towards her employers and the Georgian community also caused loneliness, depression and a craving for recognition.

Intimate distrust

Tamar tolerated the degrading care-work, buoyed by hope for a greater good in the far-distant future – the future that she planned and imagined for her son. The whole migration project was dedicated to building a dignified life for him. She stated:

> *My husband is weak, he is not a mamak'aci (real* [Georgian] *man). I was always suffering from this. For this reason, I wanted to do everything to make my son become a real man. I want to buy my son a flat. And of course he needs a car. But I never send money like other women do. I only send things that he needs for our home or for his everyday life – and gifts for sure. This is what every mother does.*

Tamar's entire migration project is dedicated to her imaginings in regard to the life of her son. By means of migration, she hopes to provide her son with the resources that would make him the kind of man (*mamak'aci*) she desired. Her economic activities are derived from her dreams concerning his manhood. Though she believes in her son's potential, she does not trust in his abilities. For this reason, she tries to exert control over him, as it is she who buys gifts and items and thus shapes his material future. Moreover, she checks his every action – an act of distrust which is interpreted as a migrant woman's motherly care in Georgia, another reminder that the notion of trust and the value of trust are socially and culturally embedded (Pedersen 2015: 105).

Tamar was one of the few migrant women who never invested in documenting her status and who returned to Georgia relatively soon (three years) after her arrival in Thessaloniki. The hope that she cultivated over the course of her migration grew when her son married and took on a new job. Though she was frightened and not sure whether or not she could risk trusting her son, when her suffering in the psychologically challenging 24-hour-care arrangement became unbearable, she decided to return to Georgia. Several months later, in Batumi, she said:

> *I see I have to leave again, he* [her son] *will not manage to pay off so many loans. Everything that is costly in our flat is sold or in the pawnshop. My friends in Greece told me, 'You will come back as soon as you understand that actually nothing works back in Georgia, that you have to ask for money to colour your hair'. They are right. I have to leave again. But I have to go to America where I will get paid better. Only then can I change the situation here.*

The hope that money would solve a multitude of problems is the biggest illusion in the migration project. Despite the large financial contribution of women to the well-being and maintenance of household lives in Georgia, many migrant women have experienced this very bitter moment after returning from migration. They realised that their substantial long-term support was not sustainable. Moreover, the demands of leading

a middle-class life are growing faster than salaries in Georgia. In these circumstances, Tamar did not want to accept and endure the harsh living conditions, which is what made her migrate again. This time it was not Greece – where she had already established her ties and even a job was waiting for her – but the USA which shaped her hope for faster labour achievements due to much higher salaries for migrant care-workers. In contrast to Nino, Tamar's distrust did not lead to a detachment from the distrusted subject, which would direct hope in new directions but, rather, to an engagement. Though she spatially created distance and became financially independent, her whole migration project was dedicated to substituting for the lack of trust in her son and husband. Hence, there is no turning point in her migratory experience – a turning point that is reached when migrant women like Nino start questioning their engagements due to rising distrust in the sense of their loyalty and remittances on the one hand and, on the other, entrust in new established resources in migration such as friendship, employers and own abilities. This process may apparently lead to a development of hope in the radical new. It can exist then even without trust (Pedersen and Liisberg 2015: 1).

Tamar is still counting on the hope inherent in many migration projects that is rooted in the idea that material means and money provide for the well-being of the household back home and thus sustain life across generations (Narotzky and Besnier 2014: 4–5). To cope with loss and status devaluation, Tamar, like many Georgian women, chose migration in order to restore and ensure the middle-class status of her family. The demands are high and challenging since the capitalist market economy greatly contributes to the images of well-being and class perceptions. For Tamar, as for her co-migrants, their economic practices in regard to crisis, hope and values are essentially embedded in a space that is market-dominated. However, Tamar continues labouring as a migrant care-worker (only this time in the USA) not only due to her family's lack of material means but also because she feels the need to provide her son with material attributes that correspond to the prevalent neo-traditional notions of manhood in contemporary Georgia. This invites us to think critically about the vast majority of anthropological writings on hope which, as Jansen (2021: 13) noted, consider hope to be good. Though hope bears optimism and is a positive feeling or mode, it can paralyse (Crapanzano 2003) or contradict other individuals' or groups' hopes and thus generate conflict (Jansen 2021: 13). Hope is a multifaceted and ambiguous concept, as it has the potential to both enable and disable (Parla 2019). Thus hope can also be oppressive. The sons and daughters of Georgian women labouring in Greece, for example, often feel obliged to follow the life paths that have been designed by their migrant mothers in order not to destroy their hopes as well as their endurance to withstand migration. This is also a heavy burden for adult children back in Georgia.

Yet, when thinking about Tamar's economic practices and the hopes attached to them, one also has to consider the years of uncertainty she experienced before migration and the hopelessness of this particular 'Soviet' generation trying to make a living in Georgia. This hopelessness, which has been expressed by almost all of the Georgian migrant women that were a part of this research, is often related to the reported unwillingness of the various post-Soviet Georgian governments to acknowledge women's migration struggles and their Soviet educational background. This points to the importance of yet another actor playing a significant role in creating and distributing 'societal hope' in capitalist systems: the nation state – which also excludes certain marginalised groups from state-promoted visions of social advancement (Hage 2003), as most Georgian migrant women would certainly agree with.

It can be concluded that hope not only arises in situations of uncertainty (Hage 2003; Kleist 2017; Miyazaki 2004; Vigh 2009), but also 'out of the socio-historic-cultural, as well as the personal, condition of struggle' (Zigon 2009: 262). The struggle is inherent in Tamar's migration project and, more precisely, in her labour activity since the precarious working conditions and the exhausting 24-hour live-in care-work sustain a very uncertain environment and challenge her daily life on many levels. Still, it is this daily labour struggle through

which migrant women have to discipline their bodies and minds (Fedyuk 2011) in order to cope with the pressing circumstances and to sustain the hope of finally achieving the imagined well-being of one's household.

Like Tamar, all interviewed migrant women hoped that, through their engagement and hard work, the living conditions of the entire family would change. Though the care-work for the elderly and sick is perceived as devalued, this same work engenders the hope that, through its gains and assets, the status of the family back in Georgia can be released from devaluation. This logic also feeds the hope of healing broken relationships since, like many migrant women, Tamar and Nino left Georgia while being trapped in destructive marriages.

Tamar is still labouring from a distance in order to sustain her hopes and transform the imagined future into her present. Although while living and working in the USA she does not physically participate in this present that is localised in Georgia, her distrust of her son's and her husband's abilities is the driving force in her struggles of everyday hardship in migration. She hopes to return to Georgia after creating circumstances that will meet her conceived financial demands for the family, which means that she would risk trusting anew.

Conclusions

The findings of this article support the view that hope and trust are indispensable means of navigating the insecurity that is symptomatic of migration. What they also indicate, however, is that in particular migratory experiences, hope has a paralysing and distrust a mobilising effect that, in certain circumstances, lays the grounds for new hopes. It is with this observation that we aim to contribute to the flourishing anthropology of hope and the nascent anthropology of mistrust, as well as to migration studies. Whereas the first has recently brought to the fore the constructive potential of distrust (Carey 2017; Mühlfried 2019), the latter is still dominated by a perception of distrust as a problem – e.g. by pointing to the distrust with which refugees are often confronted as an obstacle to their integration (Daniel and Knudsen 1995).

As for the anthropology of hope, we follow the call to pay attention to the 'potential detrimental effects of the work of hope' (Jansen 2021: 14). In respect to studies of mistrust, we converge with approaches illustrating that distrust does not equal the absence of trust (which often has a paralysing effect) but is, instead, to be seen as a mode of engagement – and thus may increase agency (cf. Carey 2017; Mühlfried 2019). Finally, we intend to put into perspective migration studies that have highlighted hope's emancipatory and visionary potential (e.g. Kleist and Thorsen 2017) and make the argument that such potential and effects should not be taken for granted. For quite a few of the Georgian care workers in Thessaloniki, for example, it is precisely the hope that things will change for the better that ties them to exploitative relationships and deeply unsatisfying settings.

In this context, rising distrust fosters feelings, convictions and actions that may eventually lead to a radical break with such relationships and settings, as exemplified in the experience of Nino, whose distrust in her 'patrons' opened up new horizons beyond exploitation. Based on these experiences, it rather seems that hope can be counterproductive – as it hinders the development and 'activation' of distrust, often over long periods of time – and that therefore hope, in certain situations, limits agency.

Migrants, such as the Georgian women in Thessaloniki, usually enter a field that is saturated by distrust, both in respect to their domestic workplace and to the migrant community itself. In order to cope with these situations, most migrants rely on trust-based relationships (Xypolitas *et al*. 2017). These relationships can be based on kinship, locality or joint experiences and can often be traced back to a mutual country or region of origin. Such relations provide protection in an unknown field that is difficult to navigate and potentially dangerous, not least because of the distrust the newcomers are confronted with. They also provide access to the local labour market – usually at a price, however. This price is to be paid in the form of money deduced from one's income handed over to brokers, job intermediaries, or in the form of favours to patrons that are not voluntary but, rather, 'part of the deal'.

After greater familiarity with patrons, the migrant community and the local labour situation, distrust often sneaks in. This may lead to a disentangling from constitutive relationships which, in turn, opens up a new space – as in the case of Nino illustrated above. This new space, in turn, contains the seeds of hope. In other words, hope comes into play only after a process of social disentanglement that is fostered by distrust. In this vein, Nino could only imagine a future beyond the realm of her depressing personal and professional surroundings by taking seriously the reality that the trust she invested into her 'patrons' was a wrong investment – or at least an investment that should come to an end at a certain point. In this vein, rather than hope (*imedi*), it is the act of its loss that allows for the imagining of a better future.

There are other cases, however, when the loss of trust does not foster hope but, rather, frustration. This is when, as in the case of Tamar, people feel that they are incapable of trusting any more: *ver vendobi* (I cannot trust). The modal verb *ver* (cannot) indicates cases or relations in which trust is desired, was once present and is dearly missed – or is perceived to be expected. For Tamar, it is the sad impossibility of trusting her husband and her son that motivated her to migrate and to take things into her hands; but the ongoing distrust of her husband sharply contrasts with the old hopes she is trying to maintain – namely, that the lives of her closest relative can be substantially improved by the means of her remittances, and that – with such improvement – she would no longer have to distrust them. She hopes to one day be able to overcome and 'heal' distrust. As in the case of Nino, then, distrust created a distance from the distrusted; however, this distance did not open up a space for (new) hope.

For this to happen – in other words: for distrust to become productive – the availability of social resources is decisive (Zmiejewski 2020). One such a resource – and a crucial one for migrants – are social networks, preferably those that extend into the realm of the local. For Nino and Tamar, for example, it makes a significant difference whether they obtain information regarding the kind, availability and payment of work from locals or from fellow migrants. It also matters if they are accompanied by a Greek citizen when dealing with a Greek government agency such as the immigration office. In this vein, friendships or partnerships are vital resources for dealing with distrust, as are stable workplaces and a documented status.

Any effort to scale distrust along a range 'varying from "hard" (paralysing) distrust to "prudent" distrust that allows for certain interactions' (Humphrey 2018: 14) thus needs to reflect the impact of resource availability. The consideration of this particular variable actually contributes to a finer-tuning of the scale. Based on the experiences of Georgian migrant women in Greece, it seems that the development of stable, substantial and reliable resources increases the likelihood of 'prudent distrust' by opening up a space of hope, whereas the lack or weakness of new resources hampers the development of hope and the concomitant search for alternatives.

Notes

1. Humphrey (2018: 9) differentiates between mistrust as an 'initial stance towards others' and distrust as 'a consequence of being let down', hence the wording. In a similar vein, Carey (2017: 9) contrasts his approximation to mistrust with a take on distrust that characterises the latter as 'based on a specific past experience'. Although, according to Merriam-Webster's *New Dictionary of Synonyms* (1984: 263), mistrust and distrust are largely used interchangeably in quotidian parlance, we will, in what follows, refer to distrust as a particular and focused response to an object and to mistrust as a more general, 'fuzzy', multi-layered and multi-dimensional phenomenon.
2. Interviews were also conducted with the husbands and children of migrant women back in Georgia.
3. The research adheres to the ethics guidelines of ABv Code of Ethics (https://antropologen.nl/app/uploads/2019/01/ABv_Code-of-Ethics_2019.pdf).

4. One of the two women, Nino, received her documented status after our fieldwork was conducted.
5. All personal names are anonymised in order to secure confidentiality and compliance with ethics guidelines.
6. The house in Georgia, where her husband and her daughters lived, belonged to her husband's family.
7. According to the 'Migration Profile' of Georgia authored by the State Commission on Migration Issues (2017: 14), which relies on a census from 2014 conducted by the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat). Available online at http://migration.commission.ge/files/migration_profile_2017_eng__final_.pdf (accessed 1 August 2022).
8. The Greek media has mainly targeted Albanian domestic migrants for being supposedly involved in criminal activities (Vullnetari 2012: 86) but, in recent years, stories have started circulating about Georgian domestic workers being recruited by the 'Georgian mafia'. These articles from the newspapers *Theotoc* and *Newsit* are examples: https://www.thetoc.gr/koinwnia/article/gewrgianes-narkwnan-kai-ekleban-ta-thumata-tous and https://www.newsit.gr/ellada/thyma-georgianon-liston-oikiaki-voithos-2602/1458101/ (accessed 1 August 2022).

Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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— SPECIAL SERIES —

Predicting a Migration Transition in Poland and its Implications for Population Ageing

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Poland, traditionally a country of emigration, started to record a positive migration balance in recent years. However, thus far, no forecast has indicated the possibility of Poland's transition from a net sending to a net receiving regime. This study indicates the theoretical underpinnings of such a change and provides an international migration projection. To this end, we refer to the historical experiences of other European countries, more advanced in terms of the Demographic Transition (DT), Second Demographic Transition (SDT) and Migration Transition. We develop a deterministic migration projection of four types of flow (the in- and out-migration of nationals and foreign citizens) up until 2060, combined with the United Nations' Bayesian probabilistic models of fertility and mortality projections. The results show that Poland will evolve from having a net sending to having a net receiving status around 2030–2034. The combined effect of migration flows on population ageing will not be significant but, in the long run, when considered separately, the four types of flow will have non-negligible, though opposite, effects: the outflows will contribute to population rejuvenation, while the inflows will accelerate population ageing.

Keywords: population ageing, international migration, migration projection, demographic transition, migration transition, Poland

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Introduction

In his seminal study on demographic transition (DT), Chesnais (1986, 1992) proposed the theoretical concept of the migration transition (MT) to describe how the international migration balances of Western European countries switched from negative to positive. In his view, the mass overseas emigration in the second half of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century relieved the population pressure that had arisen as a result of the high natural increase during the DT. In the second half of the twentieth century, the low demographic dynamics and advanced population ageing during the second demographic transition (SDT) in Europe incited, according to Van de Kaa (1999, 2004), a constant inflow of foreigners. Indeed, all countries considered by the United Nations (UN) as Western[1] and Northern[2] European have registered positive migration balances since the early 1960s or the 1970s, respectively (United Nations 2019) and, alongside the low or negative natural increase rate, immigration became the main driver of population growth (Coleman 2008).

The post-communist countries of Europe, on the other hand, had been subject to severe restrictions on international mobility under the communist regime and, when these restrictions were lifted in the 1990s, this immediately prompted considerable emigration from many of them. In the post-communist countries of the European Union[3] (EU), this outflow was primarily stimulated by the opening of the labour markets of other EU member states to these countries' citizens (Bruecker *et al.* 2009; Salt and Almeida 2006). This situation is changing rapidly, though, and 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 (Drbohlav 2012; Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008; OECD 2019). Since February 2022, an unprecedently massive inflow of Ukrainian war refugees to Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and the Baltic States has been taking place. At this point, little can be said on how permanent this inflow will be. Nevertheless, this development strengthens the argument that a MT may soon occur in this part of Europe. Meanwhile, the existing projections of international migration (European Commission 2019; United Nations 2022) contain no indication of reversal in the hitherto observed trends, such as a transition from the 'net sending' to a 'net receiving' status of Poland. The reason is that, with one important exception (Wiśniowski *et al*. 2012), most projections are based on net migration rates, instead of on their components: immigration and emigration.
In this study, we adopt the perspective of long-term population processes and ask:

(Q1) What are the major implications of the DT and SDT[4] for the trends in international migration?

Then, focusing on Poland, the largest post-communist EU member state in terms of population, we ask:

(Q2) What lessons for the future of migration in Poland can be learnt from the historical experiences of other European countries, in particular those more advanced in DT and SDT?

As changes in population age structure are to intensify immigration in the late phase of the MT, we investigate:

(Q3) In what way will the different migration flows affect the ageing of the population of Poland over extended timeframes, given that Poland follows other European countries in MT?

To answer these questions, we establish a population projection for Poland with a detailed international migration component consisting of four flows – i.e. the inflows and outflows of nationals and of foreign citizens – each of which is potentially determined by different factors. Furthermore, distinguishing between the different migration flows allows us to identify the separate impacts of emigration and immigration on

a population's age structure; this has never been investigated before as most studies concerning historical populations are based on net migration. We conclude that, depending on the advancement of MT, inflows and outflows exert opposite impacts – favouring either population ageing or rejuvenation – and may neutralise each other, which makes the net effect marginal but does not mean that migration does not affect population ageing in the long term.

Theoretical background

Demographic transition and long-term migration trends in European countries

Without formulating a precise definition, Chesnais (1986, 1992) developed the concept of MT in reference to a historical experience of European countries undergoing the process of DT. According to Chesnais, MT depends strictly on changes in natural increase during DT and is subject to two phases: in the first, emigration exceeds immigration and the migration balance is negative (the net sending phase); in the second, immigration exceeds emigration and the migration balance is positive (the net receiving phase).

According to Chesnais, mass emigration in the first phase of the MT was a salient and neglected factor in the European demography of the nineteenth century. In the times of high demographic dynamics during DT, mobility within countries, within the continent and overseas, emerged as a phenomenon diminishing population pressure in the rural areas and contributing to economic development, notably industrialisation and urbanisation. This way of reasoning falls into a wider domain of research on the so-called hidden unemployment ('overpopulation'), prevailing in agricultural regions with high natural increase (Davis 1963; Livi-Bacci 1972; Magnussen and Siqveland 1978; Moe 1970; Quigley 1972; Wilkinson 1970). For instance, Moore (1945) analysed the relation between productive capacities and population growth in agricultural areas in Eastern and Southern Europe pre-World War II (WWII). As the tempo of industrialisation was insufficient to absorb the surplus population from rural areas, where high natural increase prevailed, he viewed emigration as a direct 'safety valve' serving to neutralise the disequilibrium between the demographic regime and the economic system. Similarly, in his theory of change and response, Davis (1963) postulated that emigration constituted one of several possible adjustments to declining infant mortality and sustained natural increase in the early phase of DT. While city dwellers adopted relatively early contraceptive methods because high fertility 'was handicapping them in their effort to take advantage of the opportunities being provided by the emerging economy' (1963: 352), farmers continued to have numerous offspring and to send their children away once they become adults.

The scale of this migration can be roughly estimated only in reference to the flows leaving the European continent: the number of emigrants leaving the countries of origin between 1816 and 1914 was approximately 44 million (Baines 2003), whereas the number of immigrants registered in the main overseas destinations amounted to 52 million (Baines 2003; King 1996). As Okólski (2012a) points out, the latter estimate constitutes a quarter of the entire natural increase observed in Europe at this epoch (based on Chesnais' estimates). The scale of this international mobility becomes even greater if we allow for mobility within the continent: as population surpluses emerged according to the onset of demographic transition, first in the North and West and later in the South and East, industrial sectors in the pioneering countries in Europe attracted labour migrants from countries that lagged behind in economic terms. For instance, between 1876 and 1920, almost half of Italian emigrants, nearly 7 million persons, migrated within Europe – mostly to France, Germany and Switzerland (Castles and Miller 1993). England became a destination for Irish migrants (MacRaild 1999), whereas Germany attracted migrants of Polish origin (Herbert 1986; O'Brien 1992).

Detailed investigations of the emigration from Europe overseas revealed the periodic character of flows (Chesnais 1986). In his seminal study, Kuznets (1930) distinguished several waves of migration from Europe to the United States, succeeding in the nineteenth century every 15 to 25 years. In his interpretation, these waves were originally brought about by the cotton production growth in the US while, later, they were enhanced by the infrastructure investment 'swings' in this country, thus enhancing the periods of economic growth. Other authors also underlined the importance of better economic opportunities in the destination – in particular, higher incomes and lower unemployment – for European emigration (Gallaway and Vedder 1971; Jerome 1926; Kelley 1965; Richardson 1972). However, Thomas (1954) reversed Kuznets' reasoning and noticed that, as investment swings occurred simultaneously in the US and other important destinations, they all resulted from structural conditions 'pushing out' migrants from their countries of origin. He claimed that the first wave of massive emigration, taking place in 1844–1854, resulted from a baby boom in the 1820s that had compensated for the low natality in the period of the Napoleonic wars and contributed, 20 years later, to a considerable increase in the number of young adults.

Several scholars found a statistical relation between the surge in natural increase and time-lagged waves of overseas emigration from Europe, which particularly applied to the flow into the US until WWI, when no severe immigration restrictions were imposed. The overseas migration from Europe appeared to be strongly related to prior population dynamics; according to studies for Norway and Sweden (Ravnholt 1937; Thomas 1954) and other European countries (Easterlin 1961), surges in natural increase in these countries were followed by emigration waves to the United States and other destinations in the 'new world' some 20–25 years later. As shown for 12 Western European countries, this statistical relation prevailed independently from economic factors, such as international wage disparities (Hatton and Williamson 1998).

In the post-WWII period, many European countries registered a positive migration balance systematically. This began in the western and the northern and, later, occurred in the southern, part of the continent (King and Okólski 2018; Okólski 2012b). However, contrary to the first 'emigration' phase of MT, which has unequivocally been interpreted by Chesnais and other authors as a response to high demographic dynamics during DT, the root causes of transition from a net sending to a net receiving status are not viewed unanimously. Chesnais (1986) emphasised its demographic determinants: low natural increase in Europe and simultaneous population growth in less-developed countries outside Europe. Other authors referred to the economic circumstances in Europe from the 1950s onwards, such as the economic boom related to the post-war reconstruction (Bonifazi 2008; Frey and Mammey 1996; Kaya 2002; Salt, Singleton and Hogarth 1994), the global flow of international capital towards more developed countries (Castles and Miller 1993) or the increased segmentation of labour markets and unsatisfied demand for low-skilled workers (Van Mol and de Valk 2016). According to Fassmann and Reeger (2012), immigration responds to growing labour deficits related to population ageing. The most frequently cited political causes are the 'return' or 'repatriation' of nationals due to decolonisation (Bonifazi 2008; Kaya 2002; Salt *et al*. 1994; Van Mol and de Valk 2016), the violation of human rights and the restriction of personal freedom in non-democratic countries (Frey and Mammey 1996; Kaya 2002; Van Mol and de Valk 2016) and the positive political climate with regard to immigration (e.g. Bonifazi 2008). However, almost all explanations tacitly admit that, in the early post-WWII decades, many European countries suffered from a relative deficit in the native labour force.

The concept of DT and its widely recognised and crucial outcome – population ageing – are very rarely associated with MT. Only occasionally is the latter considered to be an integral element of DT; the voice of Van de Kaa (1999, 2004), who incorporated the migration component into a wider European framework of DT and SDT, went almost unnoticed. In his view, international migration redresses the imbalance between natality and mortality during both the DT and the SDT – and inflow from abroad becomes an intrinsic element of demographic patterns in contemporary European countries.

In what follows, we adopt this specific interpretation of MT. We concentrate on demographic factors inciting immigration in a constant and inherent way, underlining the importance of low fertility and the increasing proportion of older individuals. In the empirical analysis that follows, we investigate whether the above-mentioned demographic phenomena will provoke Poland’s turn from a net sending to a net receiving migration status, first due to a decrease in the outflow and then to an increase in the inflow, as happened in European countries which were more advanced in DT and SDT.

The impact of international migration on population ageing during MT

International migration may be viewed as both a result and a determinant of the process of population ageing. In the stylised model of DT, this process is mainly driven by fertility decline as the latter not only puts an end to the growth in the youngest population segments but also neutralises the rejuvenating effect of infant mortality decline observed in the early phase of DT (Coale 1956). However, as fertility stabilises during DT and SDT, ageing is intensified by declines in adult mortality, particularly for the oldest age groups (Bengtsson and Scott 2010; Horiuchi 1991; Preston and Stokes 2012). Murphy (2017) showed that, in Western Europe, the process of ageing evolved from being fertility-driven to being mortality-driven shortly after WWII. For a number of reasons as we have discussed elsewhere (Fihel, Janicka and Kloc-Nowak 2018), the role of international migration has been investigated less than the roles of fertility and mortality. Changes in international migration, however, do have a direct and immediate impact on the age composition of the populations of both origin and destination, mostly because mobility is a highly selective phenomenon with regard to age: young working-age people are more prone to migration than their juniors and, especially, than their seniors (Rogers and Castro 1981).

As DT progresses, changes in fertility and mortality affect the age composition of a population in a clearly patterned manner, depending on the phase of the transition. Similarly, the impact of migration seems to be strongly dependent on the advancement of DT and MT. Initially, when fertility is still high and the proportion of children increases, an growth in the emigration rates of young adults contributes to the rejuvenation of the age structure, as long as the mean age of emigrants exceeds that of the general population. Later, however, when natality declines and the mean population age rises, an outflow reduces the proportion of young adults in the population, indirectly increasing the proportions of other segments and negatively affecting the number of new births. This contributes to population ageing. When emigration and immigration reach equivalent levels, marking a turning point in the migration balance, the effect of migration becomes increasingly sensitive to differences in the age composition of emigrants and immigrants. Given that both flows are likely to consist mostly of young working-age persons, however, this effect might be close to neutral.

The increase in immigration during the MT and its age selectivity ensure ‘gains’ in the mobile-age population, which initially slows down population ageing. However, the long-term effect of positive net migration depends on its intensity (whether it grows, declines or stabilises) and the inclusion of the descendants of immigrants; if we allow for the first generation of a foreign-born population only, the instantaneous rejuvenation effect is replaced by the opposite effect as soon as migrants start to age. If, however, we also consider the appearance of the descendants of first-generation immigrants, the impact on the age composition also depends on the difference between the fertility levels of the foreign-origin population and the native population (and its persistence).

The stable population model and long-term projections show that, if immigrants adapt their fertility to that of natives, immigration would have to increase incessantly in order to have any effect on the population age structure (Coale 1986; Espenshade1994) and to counteract the ageing process (Bijak, Kupiszewska, Kupiszewski, Saczuk and Kicinger 2007; United Nations 2001). If immigrants originating in less-developed

countries maintain the fertility levels of their home country, which is highly improbable in the long term, they may significantly contribute to natality and population rejuvenation (Feichtinger and Steinmann 1992; Jonsson and Rendall 2004). In low-fertility countries, the young native population has shrunk so much that, in line with the mechanism of inert momentum, immigrants and their descendants are becoming an increasingly important reproduction factor (Ediev, Coleman and Scherbov 2014; Lutz, O'Neill and Scherbov 2003; Wilson, Sobotka and Williamson 2013).

Although several exceptions can be distinguished, empirical studies for European countries and the US[5] have confirmed the stylised relations between migration and ageing described above. In the net sending phase, negative net migration exerted a rejuvenating, albeit minimal, impact in Western Europe: in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the mean population age in this region increased by 2.09 years but the net migration component acted in the opposite direction and accounted for -0.56 years of the mean population age change (Murphy 2017). This effect was larger and longer in two countries with particularly intensive outflows – Sweden and Norway. Several decades later, immigration quotas introduced in the US after WWI led to a significant increase in the older population in Sweden – a sending country (Murphy 2017; Preston, Himes and Eggers 1989). Similarly, in Italy, the number of persons aged 60 and older considerably increased between 1952 and 1986, because the cohorts aged 60+ in 1952 had had more political freedom to emigrate during their lifetime than those aged 60+ in 1986 (Caselli and Vallin 1990).

In the net receiving phase, if we allow for both arriving persons and their descendants, positive net migration slowed down the increase in the older segment of the population (Lanzieri 2013; Preston and Stokes 2012). In Sweden, the positive net migration was found to restrain the increase in the proportion of older persons by the year 2000 (Bengtsson and Scott 2005) whereas, in the US, immigration had a rejuvenating effect on the population's age composition until the 1950s (Notestein 1960). The same effect was observed between 1975 and 2012 in Western Europe (Murphy 2017) and between 1948 and 1988 in France, although it became weaker towards the end of the 1970s when the inflow diminished (Dittgen 1992; Murphy 2017).

All the studies discussed above are based on the net migration component and present only the combined effect of inflow and outflow. Moreover, to the best of our knowledge, there exists only one analysis of the impact of international migration on population ageing that includes countries in Central or Eastern Europe and it is also based on the net migration concept (Philipov and Schuster 2010). Historical sources on demographic events in Central and Eastern Europe are scarce, since few records of such events were kept and even fewer have been preserved to this day. Of those that did survive, many concern populations which, due to the changes in borders and statehoods following WWI and WWII, are ethnically and nationally incoherent with the contemporary societies of Europe. In the third section, we investigate how international migration affects the process of ageing in Poland and, to this end, we separate the contributions of emigration and immigration that may be driven by demographic and other factors.

Disturbed course of MT in Poland

When a large body of research on agrarian 'overpopulation' started to develop after WWI, scholars from Poland made important methodological and empirical contributions to these studies (Mincer 1944; Poniatowski 1936) and not without reason.[6] In Poland, during the period of most intensive population growth – that is, in the 1920s and 1930s – the migration potential found no outlet abroad due to the immigration restrictions gradually imposed by the main hitherto receiving countries. Although the demographic potential of Poland was reduced by 40 per cent during WWII (Okólski 2002), it was restored in the postwar decades due to relatively high fertility. In 1948, international mobility became strictly controlled and suppressed

– practically making Poland a 'non-exit country' – and the only emigration of a permanent nature concerned persons of German or Jewish ethnicity (Iglicka 2001, 2019).

After the introduction of martial law in 1981, Western European countries began to recognise Polish nationals as politically oppressed and to apply relatively liberal asylum procedures to those who managed to reach Austria or West Germany under the guise of tourism. Long-term emigration along this route amounted to almost 1.1 million individuals in the 1980s (Sakson 2002) and continued throughout the 1990s, though on a smaller scale. The population census conducted in 2002 revealed that 626,000 persons, still registered as permanent residents of Poland, had been living abroad for more than a year at the time of the census. A real exodus followed Poland's accession to the EU in 2004, when Poles were granted, immediately or following transitory restrictions, full rights to settle down and work in other EU member states. Between 2004 and 2018, as many as 326,600 persons officially de-registered from the place of permanent stay in Poland,[7] whereas the stock of emigrants who had not registered their departure increased from approximately 1 to 2.5 million (Statistics Poland 2018). Nevertheless, unlike Western European countries which recorded mass emigration during a time of high natural increase, the outflow from Poland occurred under specific circumstances characteristic of SDT (Brzozowska 2021; Kotowska, Jóźwiak, Matysiak and Baranowska-Rataj 2008; Sobotka 2008): very low fertility, an increasing proportion of older persons and a natural increase fluctuating at around zero.

In the most recent years, notably in the second decade of the twenty-first century, stable economic growth and increasing labour shortages due to massive outflow abroad created perfect circumstances for labour immigration, initially in low-paid household services and seasonal work in agriculture and construction and, later, in other economic sectors as well (Górny and Kaczmarczyk 2018; Górny, Grabowska-Lusinska, Lesińska and Okólski 2010). Poland has recorded a positive net migration balance for registered migration[8] since 2016, while Eurostat assessments of long-term net migration rates have changed sign since 2019. Furthermore, Poland has lately been issuing the highest number of first residence permits to foreign nationals in the entirety of the EU (Eurostat 2019). All this suggests that it is very likely that Poland is currently undergoing a turn in its migration regime.

Methodology

Population projection

Our population projection for the period 2015–2060 is based on the Bayesian framework established by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. We use the World Population Prospects probabilistic models for fertility and mortality (Alkema, Gerland, Raftery and Wilmoth 2015), along with the provided estimation tools (Sevcikova, Raftery and Gerland 2013). Our projection for Poland significantly differs, however, from that prepared by the UN. First, we use different historical population numbers and structures to allow for migration that has been taking place since the 1980s without being noted in the population register (see Annex 1) and adjust the values for Total Fertility Rate (TFR) and life expectancy at birth in accordance with these population numbers. Second, we introduce a more elaborate projection with regard to international migration; instead of smoothing the net migration figures to zero within the projection horizon, we develop an econometric model of different types of migration flow. The models are described in more detail below and in Annex 2; at this point, it is worth noting that the migration projection is deterministic. Despite some attempts (Azose and Raftery 2015), probabilistic models of migration were not incorporated in any official UN population forecast revision as of 2023. Finally, the horizon of the projection is shortened

compared to the UN population forecast and set at 2060, for two reasons. Although we do not formally quantify the uncertainty of the migration projection with probabilistic tools, it is obvious that projections with a longer horizon are associated with a larger potential error. Also, the migration projection relies on economic predictions for the variables used in the models and these predictions are generally much more short-term than demographic forecasts.

Migration projection

Although exogeneous disturbances (Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine) certainly affect the course of international mobility, we expect that, in the long run, migration flows will be largely determined by general demographic and economic circumstances. A similar approach is adopted, for example, in the United Nations (2022) projection, where pre-COVID-19 migration trends were used to forecast (net) migration in the long run.

Our projection is grounded on the concept of MT: we make use of the developments that countries at more advanced stages of this transition underwent in order to forecast a reversal in the observed migration trends (from a negative migration balance to a positive one) in Poland. We apply a deterministic approach; in the first step, we estimate panel models for EU countries[9] to determine the common pattern (panels being the most suitable tool for this purpose, see Annex 2) and, in the second, we extrapolate the results into the future for Poland.[10] These models enable us to capture the general relationships observed in recent history in the entire sample of countries at different stages of the MT (for West, North, South and, eventually, East Europe), as well as to take into account the perhaps unobservable specifics of each country. Data for the 30 other European countries form an unbalanced panel for the years 1998–2014.[11] The objective was to construct empirically grounded models which would be flexible enough to show MT in response to economic and demographic variables, without the need to first explicitly specify the predicted paths.

Migration data for Poland (2004–2014), corrected to allow for actual, rather than registered flows, were presented and discussed elsewhere (Fihel *et al*. 2018). As different types of migration flow in a given country are driven by a variety of factors, we analysed four types of flow: the in- and out-migration of both country nationals and of foreigners, based on the Eurostat migration database. The choice of explanatory variables for the models was constrained by theoretical considerations and limited data availability: we were only able to use those variables for which forecasted values of explanatory variables existed or could be estimated for Poland within the time frame of the projection. The potential set of determinants was narrowed down to two basic economic variables: the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – based on the OECD (2014) forecast – and the level of unemployment, based on the European Commission (2015) forecast, together with demographic variables (which could be computed step by step from our population forecast). The latter set initially included factors that may affect the migratory potential of individual countries, such as the percentage of the mobile-age population (20–39 years), the natural increase rate and birth rate and factors affecting the labour-market situation – i.e. the old-age dependency ratio (OADR) and the proportion of individuals of post-productive age, as well as past values of migration rates. Of these variables, in view of the MT perspective we adopted, the birth rate or the natural increase rate (when low) or the OADR, combined with migration rates, may be treated as an indication of the advancement of the MT within the DT and SDT. Therefore, an attempt to incorporate such demographic variables into the model of migration will also provide an answer to our first research question about the implications of DT and SDT for the trends in international migration.

Our approach does not differ from the general trends in migration modelling for Europe (cf. a review of models in Bijak 2011), in that we include exogenous economic predictors (push–pull factors) and account for the endogeneity of the time-varying processes[12]. Based on MT considerations, we additionally include

demographic determinants of international flows. This synergic approach is in line with Bijak's (2011: 51) suggestion that 'migration forecasting should ideally be model-based, rather than follow any particular theory', since individual migration theories cannot describe migration flows in their whole complexity.

The decomposition of population ageing

To investigate the demographic determinants of the process of ageing – changes in natality, mortality and international migration – we apply the model of age-specific growth rates (Horiuchi and Preston 1988) based on earlier work by Preston and Coale (1982). In the discrete version of the framework by Preston *et al*. (1989), changes in the mean population age, A_p (captured by the derivative with respect to time), can be decomposed as follows:

$$\frac{dA_p}{dt} = \sum_{x=0}^{\omega} r(x,t)c(x,t)\left(x - A_p(t)\right), \quad (1)$$

where $r(x, t)$ denotes the rate of growth of the population aged x at time t and $c(x, t)$ denotes the proportion of the population aged x at time t. We express the rate of growth of the population aged x between t and $t+1$ specifically (Fihel *et al.* 2018):

$$r(x,t,t+1) = \ln\frac{B(t-x+1)}{B(t-x)} + \ln\frac{p(x,t-x+1)}{p(x,t-x)} + + ln\frac{o^N(x,t-x+1)}{o^N(x,t-x)} + ln\frac{o^F(x,t-x+1)}{o^F(x,t-x)} + ln\frac{i^N(x,t-x+1)}{i^N(x,t-x)} + ln\frac{i^F(x,t-x+1)}{i^F(x,t-x)}, \quad (2)$$

where $B(t–x)$ denotes the number of births during the year ending at time $t-x$ and $p(x, t–x)$ denotes the fraction of the cohort born during the year ending at time $t–x$ that survived until time t; $o^N(x, t–x)$ and $o^F(x, t–x)$ denote the factor by which the cohort of nationals and foreign citizens, respectively, born during the year ending at time $t–x$, changed in size until time t due to outflow. Similarly, $i^N(x, t–x)$ and $i^F(x, t–x)$ denote the factor by which the cohort born during the year ending at time $t–x$ changed in size until time t due to inflow, after accounting for outflow. Changes in international migrants' numbers due to their mortality are embedded in the i factor, whereas births to immigrants are included in B (births). For the sake of simplicity, we assume that migrants are subject to the same mortality and fertility conditions as the non-mobile element of the population.

The model of age-specific growth rates requires longitudinal data tracking the cohorts from birth to old age. However, because reliable data about demographic events in Poland are only available from 1920 onwards (Annex 1), we were obliged to restrict our analysis to the Polish population born in 1920 or after. We chose to carry out our analysis for the period from 2010 to 2060, meaning that this research excludes people who were older than 90. While it is true that this age category significantly affects the overall process of population ageing[13], we do not believe that excluding this category jeopardises the validity of our results, as we expect the contribution of migration to the highest age groups to be negligible: the largest outflow of migrants from Poland in the present century consisted of persons born in the early 1980s and immigrants to Poland were primarily born in the 1990s or later. In short, even by the end of our projection window in 2060, the majority of immigrants and emigrants from Poland will have yet to reach the age of 90.

Results

The turnover in migration balance

The coefficients of the explanatory variables in the migration models have intuitive effects on the modelled flows (Annex 2), in particular:

- the emigration of nationals depends positively on the unemployment level in the sending country and the GDP gap relative to the average in main destinations in the EU, and has autoregressive internal dynamics;
- the immigration of nationals (i.e., return migration) depends positively on the GDP growth rate in the receiving country, as well as on the magnitude of previous flows of nationals (in both directions);
- the immigration of foreigners depends positively on the GDP level and growth rate in the receiving country and negatively on the unemployment level. It also depends on demographic characteristics (in particular, negatively on the net increase rate in the receiving country), is higher for EU15 countries and has autoregressive internal dynamics; and
- the emigration of foreigners depends positively on the magnitude of previous flows of foreigners (in both directions).

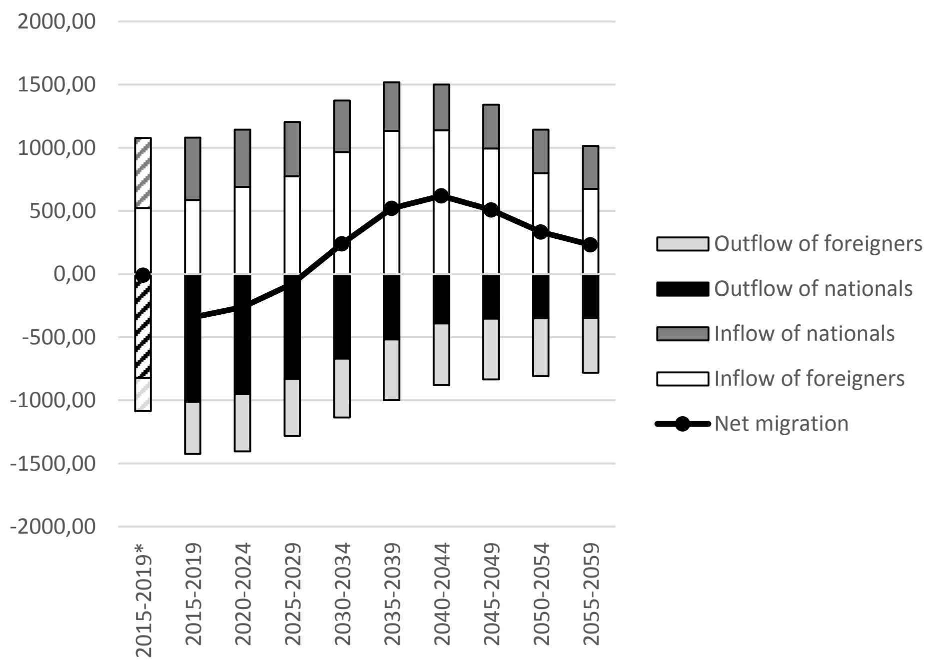
As far as the demographic determinants were concerned, the best fit was obtained in the model for immigration of foreigners (the natural increase rate and the OADR). On the one hand, this may be attributed to the fact that historical trends in emigration outbursts from the majority of countries (in particular, Western European countries) were not accounted for in the studied period (from 1998 onwards). On the other hand, this result underlines the importance of the immigration of foreigners as a turning point in the course of the MT. Of the two demographic variables, the natural increase rate was the more important factor, with a strong negative effect: the lower the natural increase, the higher the inflow of foreigners. Combined with a positive autoregressive term of the immigration rate, this accounts for initiating inflow and sustaining it once the host country reaches a certain phase of the DT/SDT. On the other hand, a negative effect of the OADR means that, in the long run, once the share of older population groups grows significantly, immigration flows will stabilise and even decrease. This negative sign of the OADR variable may, in view of our research question, be explained by the simultaneous importance of a dummy variable describing EU15 countries, as all these countries are at a more advanced stage of the DT.

For clarity of presentation, in what follows we focus on the migration scenario corresponding to the median population forecast although the results for other plausible quartiles remain similar (see Annex 2): they indicate a transition from a net sending to a net receiving migration regime in the same period. Interestingly, the migration flows have a ‘stabilising’ effect with regard to the population forecast due to the fact that they are strongly correlated with the natural increase rate in the receiving population: lower fertility and higher mortality combinations – which lead to lower population levels – coincide with higher net migration, while higher fertility and lower mortality combinations – which lead to higher population levels – coincide with lower net migration flows.

Our estimates of Polish emigration for the period preceding the projection include 1.7 million in 2005–2009 – immediately following the country’s accession to the EU – and 1 million in 2010–2014. Within the projection horizon, the outflow of Poles is expected to gradually decrease, starting from values of approximately 1 million per 5-year period, down to one third of the value for 2055–2059 (Figure 1). Return migration is also expected to decrease, albeit at a much slower pace. Meanwhile, the flows of foreigners to Poland are expected to double until the period 2035–2044, after which inflow is expected to gradually decrease. The outflow of foreigners is expected to remain stable. Overall, the results of the modelling procedure suggest that Poland is currently undergoing a transition in its migration regime; the turning point from a net sending to a net receiving phase

would be expected to occur by 2030 (had the flows not been disturbed by recent developments). In subsequent years, an increase in net migration is predicted, after which the intensity of migration is expected to diminish. The projection shows a rapid transition from the net sending to the net receiving phase: the period of the highest immigration (2035–2039) is expected to occur only 25 years after the period of highest emigration (2010–2014). Instead of emigration reaching zero, followed by gradually increasing immigration, as we have seen in Western European countries, we predict that Poland will experience an MT with high inflows and outflows throughout its course.

Figure 1. Estimated migration flows for Poland, median result of forecast, 2015–2060 (5-year totals in thousands)



Source: Authors' own estimates.

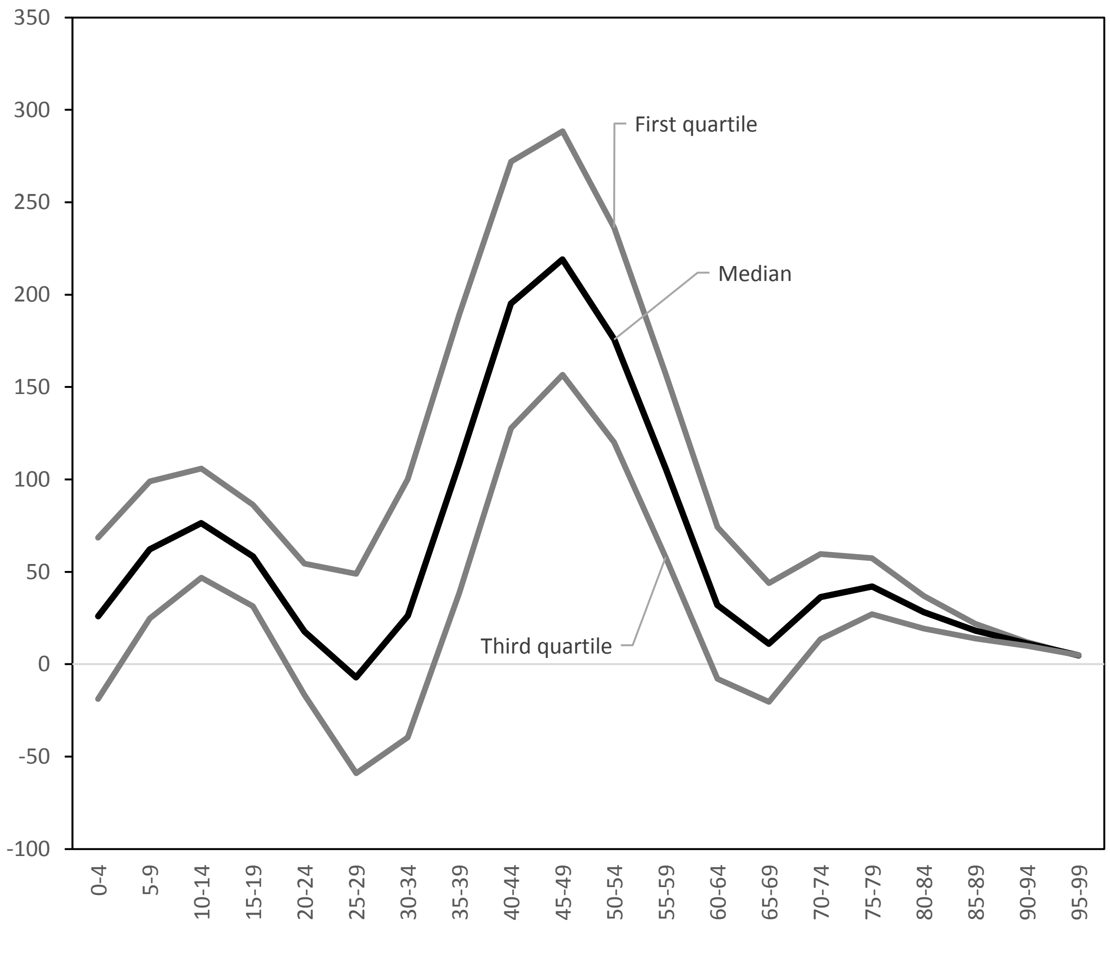
Note: The striped bars correspond to the current assessment of actual migration flows for 2015–2019.

A comparison of the flows projected by the model for the period of 2015–2019 with actual Eurostat figures (which show a slightly negative migration balance) yields the conclusion that, in our models, the mechanisms of the inflows during this period were captured very well. Higher differences are noted for outflows; this, to some extent, may be attributed to a sharp decrease in emigration to the UK in the later years, in view of the approaching Brexit.

Obviously, expected MT will affect the population size and age structure. A comparison of the proposed projection with a zero-migration (from 2015 onwards) projection yields the conclusion that, within the horizon of 2060, expected future migration accounts for an increase of 7, 4 and 2 per cent for the first, median and third quartile projections of population size, respectively. This effect is therefore considerable, especially in the scenario corresponding to the first quartile projection, where migration compensates for low natural increase (Annex 2). The impact of migration on the population structure is not uniform across the age categories. In 2060, migration contributes most to the working-age group (20–64): depending on the projection quartile, this

age category's increase as a result of migration is 15, 6 or 2 per cent relative to the no-migration scenario (Figure 2). In other age categories, the effect of migration is much less pronounced; in certain instances, there is no visible effect at all and even a slightly negative one. However, by only looking at the aggregate changes due to migration flows, we are unable to distinguish the impact of specific migration flows on the population's age composition. We therefore conduct an analysis investigating the changes occurring in age-specific categories and decompose the process of ageing into six components: natality, mortality and four types of migration flow.

Figure 2. Estimated net effect of post-2015 migration on the population size in 2060 (in thousands), by age group

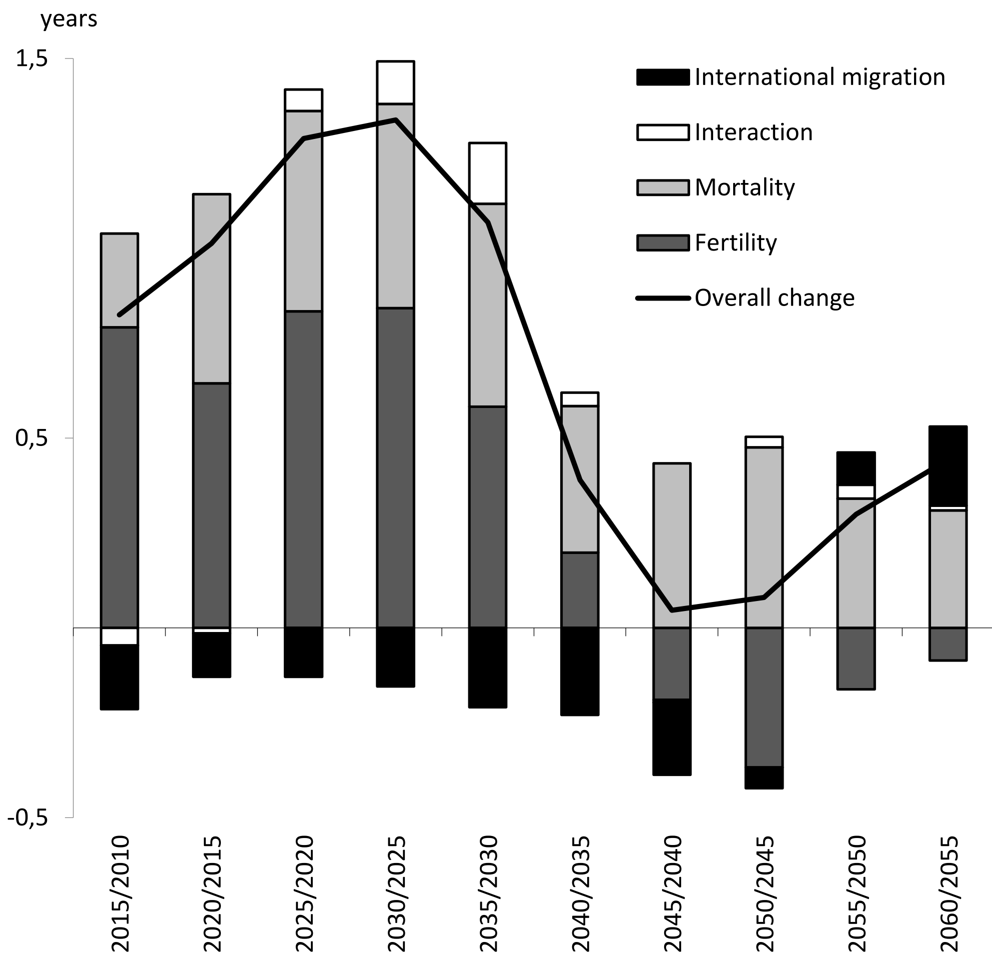


Source: Authors' own estimates.

Population ageing during the MT in Poland

All results presented in this section are based on the median scenario of the projection. Population ageing, operationalised as an increase in the mean age of the population aged 90 and younger, is expected to progress throughout the period of our analysis (Figure 3): in 2015, the mean age was 0.8 years higher than in 2010; in 2020, we predict it to be higher by one year than in 2015, etc. Between 2010 and 2060, the mean age is expected to increase from 39.6 to 46.4 years – i.e. by 6.8 years. This increase accelerates until 2030 (reaching 1.3 years during the peak 5-year period) and decelerates thereafter. Analysing the separate factors contributing to these changes – birth rate, mortality and international migration – reveals that the first contributes the most to ageing acceleration in 2010–2030. This effect has to do with the post-WWII baby boom cohorts reaching old age in this period; with the subsequent gradual diminishment of these cohorts, their contribution to the ageing process is also reduced.[14] The successive baby boom (1978–1985) was followed by a baby bust in the 1990s and 2000s; therefore, once the 1978–1985 cohorts start to vanish (a development that is expected to first reach a significant scale around 2045), the contribution of birth rate to ageing becomes negative.

Figure 3. Change in the Polish population's mean age[1] and its demographic components, 2015–2060,[2] in years

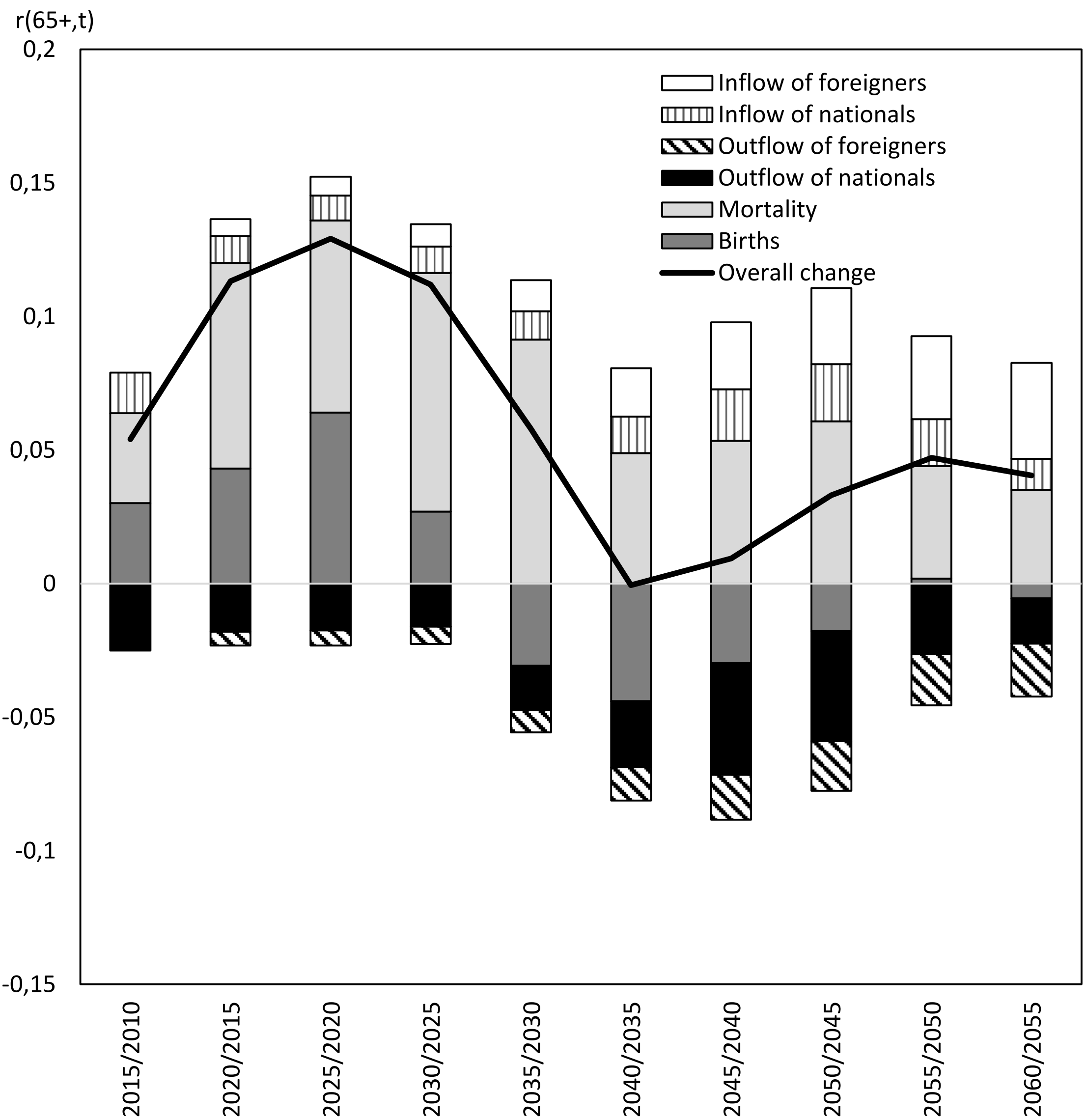


Source: Authors' own estimates.

Notes: [1] Persons aged 90 and younger; [2] As compared to each preceding 5-year period.

As in other countries with relatively stable fertility and increasing longevity, mortality in Poland will become the main driver of population ageing after 2035. Two factors contribute to this effect: first, the health crisis of 1965–1989 (Meslé 1991; Okólski 1985) had a particularly detrimental impact on cohorts born before 1965, whereas post-1989 economic and institutional changes improved the middle- and old-age survivorship of later cohorts (Fihel and Pechholdová 2017). Second, the UN forecast model assumes gradual improvements in old-age survivorship, which will eventually become the main force driving the mortality improvements. This effect is even more important when a different indicator of ageing is chosen (Figure 4): the growth rate of the older age group stems primarily from the decline in the mortality of adults.

Figure 4. Five-year growth rate of group aged 65 years and more and its demographic components, 2015–2060[1]

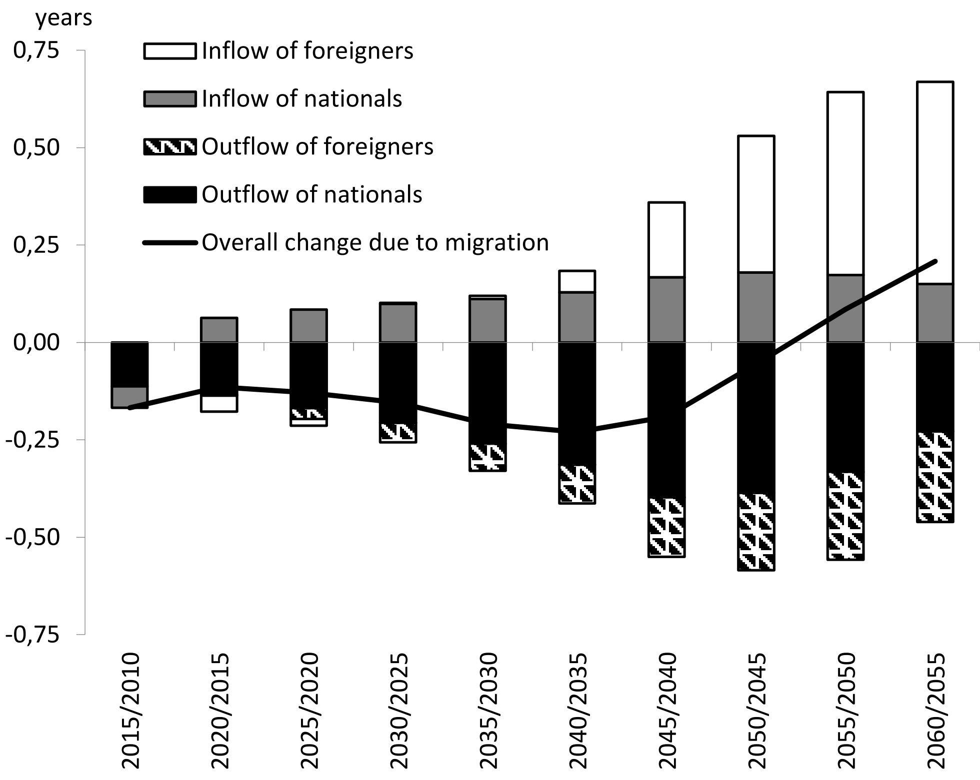


Source: Authors' own estimates.

Note: [1] Compared to each preceding 5-year period.

For the sake of simplicity, Figure 3 presents only the aggregate effect of international migration: it contributes to the population's rejuvenation until 2050, after which it contributes to population ageing; however, throughout the period of analysis, its effect remains low as compared to fertility or mortality. However, decomposing net migration into four flows (Figure 5; see also Figure 4) leads to different conclusions: the separate impacts of outflows and of inflows are relatively strong, though opposite. The outflows contribute to population rejuvenation,[15] whereas the inflows drive ageing.[16]

Figure 5. Change in the Polish population's mean age[1] due to international migration, 2015–2060,[2] in years



Source: Authors' own estimates.

Notes: [1] Persons aged 90 and younger; [2] As compared to each preceding 5-year period.

With regard to the emigration of nationals, the rejuvenating effect of this flow on the Polish population becomes considerable around 2030 and continues to increase until 2050. In this period, the most numerous cohorts of emigrants, those born in the late 1970s and in the 1980s, will reach old age.[17] The return migration of Polish nationals, on the other hand, contributes to population ageing throughout the period of our projection, particularly from 2040 on. In turn, the inflow of foreigners initially rejuvenates (2015–2025) or has no effect (2025–2040) on the population age structure in Poland. Although high, this inflow mostly consists of adults approaching the population's mean age and therefore has an instantaneous (i.e. at the moment of the immigrants' arrival) but marginal impact on the age composition of the population of Poland. However, around 2040, this effect starts to change: the inflow of foreigners that has been intense since 2015 starts to accelerate ageing – and the returns of foreigners are only able to counterbalance this to a limited extent. Around 2050, the inflow of foreigners contributes to population ageing more than any other type of flow.

To summarise, international migration contributes to the population's rejuvenation until 2050. The driving force behind this effect is the outflow of Polish nationals who had left their country of origin at the turn of the twenty-first century. However, shortly after the rejuvenating effect of the outflows reaches its peak (2040–2045), it is counterbalanced by the strong ageing effect of inflows (2055–2060). From 2055 on, international migration accelerates the process of ageing, mostly as a result of the previous inflows of foreigners. The combined impact of international migration is minimal because, under the conditions of a rapid MT, the opposite effects of outflows (rejuvenation) and inflows (ageing) coincide and neutralise each other. The impact of mobility is all the more marginal as the highest levels of outflow are followed by the highest levels of inflow, with little time between these peaks.

The results of ageing decomposition (Figure 3) also include an interaction effect that consists of the entangled impacts of the six well-defined components of demographic change. This interaction effect cannot be attributed to any particular demographic component; it is a residual that emerges when the age-specific growth rates of one well-defined component – from Formula (2) – relate demographic events to a given population at risk; however, this population is not necessarily correct due to the acting of other well-defined components. Based on our understanding, we expect that the more components one includes, the greater the interaction effect will be. In our study, the interaction effect was less than 0.05 years in all 5-year periods, except for the change in 2030 in reference to 2025 (0.11 years) and in 2035 in reference to 2030 (0.16 years).[18] This is comparable with the results obtained elsewhere for three well-defined components only (Murphy 2017).

Conclusions and discussion

This analysis is based on Chesnais' formulation of MT that captures the relation between high natural increase and emigration during the DT and Van de Kaa's postulate to consider immigration as a response to low population dynamics during the SDT. To address Q1, we provided an exhaustive review of studies illustrating the implications of population growth for the succession of the net sending and the net receiving phase in historical populations and postulated the relevance of low fertility and population ageing for immigration.

In Poland, serious mobility restrictions implemented in the inter-war period and under the communist regime deformed the relation between the population dynamics and international migration postulated by DT, SDT and MT. Unlike in most European countries, emigration became possible only towards the end of the twentieth century, during a time when fertility and natural increase became extremely low, longevity continued to rise and ageing was already set in motion. In spite of this, we were able to provide a projection of international migration for Poland, based on historical experiences of European countries well advanced in DT and MT, that addressed Q2. Our migration model captured a possible turnover in the trends that have been observed to date, with the starting point set prior to the change in migration balance. We predicted an increase and subsequent decrease in the immigration of foreigners, which will largely contribute to the change in migration balance in Poland. Our conclusions with regard to Poland may also apply to other Central European countries where immigration is currently on the increase, as well as to certain Southern European countries, such as Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, which were considered to be large-scale emigration countries for decades and became destinations for heavy immigration in the 1990s and the 2000s (King, Fielding and Black 1997; Peixoto, Arango, Bonifazi, Finotelli, Sabino, Strozza and Triandafyllidou 2012).

Most studies investigating ageing in historical populations show that, when the sending country's population is still relatively young, emigration contributes to rejuvenation but, later, when low fertility and declining mortality are causing the population to age, immigration accelerates this process. In this research, we proved that, while the global effect of international migration remains minor and ambiguous throughout the course of the MT, the separate migration components affect the population's age structure in a substantial

and variable way (Q3). In our projection we were unable to account for the descendants of emigrants, therefore the outflow of Polish nationals unequivocally slows down the ageing process. This effect, however, will be neutralised very rapidly by the increasing inflow (and ageing) of both foreigners and nationals, which is in line with the conclusions of so-called replacement migration projections (United Nations 2001) and the short-lasting effects of inflows on the age composition of a receiving country (Bijak *et al*. 2007; Bijak, Kupiszewska and Kupiszewski 2008; Kupiszewski 2013).

Our understanding of the MT relies on its original formulation by Chesnais focusing on demographic determinants of international migration. However, a large body of research on shifts in the migration balance of countries makes reference to Zelinsky (1971) and his pioneering idea of the mobility transition, perceived as a series of space–time regularities observed within various changing and phased mobilities: circular, rural–urban, intra-urban and international. Skeldon (1977, 1992, 1997, 2010, 2012) postulated a similar idea of long-term changes in mobility patterns, becoming more complex over the course of the process of economic development. In turn, de Haas (2010) put forward a theory linking migration patterns to growing capacities and changing aspirations to migrate. Other authors, focusing on various countries and regions around the world, limit their definition of MT to the change from a net emigration to a net immigration balance as the result of a country's economic development (Abella 1994; Clemens 2014; Fields 1994; Findlay, Jones and Davidson 1998; İçduygu 2014; İçduygu and Kirişci 2009; Încalţărău 2012; Kim 2017; King and Rybaczuk 1993; King *et al*. 1997; Skeldon 1992). These studies do not consider in any detail the demographic underpinnings of such changes and make no reference to Chesnais' work on the relation between demographic and migration transitions.[19] Therefore, we do not consider these approaches to be compatible with analyses of population ageing, such as the present study contains.

This study has proved that, with a strong theoretical framework that identifies common regularities for different countries, one can model different types of flow without accepting simplistic assumptions, such as a constant or constantly diminishing net migration rate. Indeed, studying different types of flow (in- and outflows) and migrants (nationals/foreigners) has important analytical and interpretative advantages, whereas the concept of net migration relates to no real phenomena. By analogy, when investigating a population's evolution, demographers do not refer only to natural increase but distinguish between the trends and intensity of natality and mortality.

As with most forecasts, the projection presented here has important limitations. First, it makes use of other economic and demographic forecasts, which increases its uncertainty. Second, it does not allow for one of the most important factors in international migration, namely migration policies in Poland and other countries. Third, it is not immune to short-term exogenous shocks, such as the mass inflow of war refugees due to the Russian aggression on Ukraine or the likely effects that the COVID-19 pandemic will have on international mobility. What needs to be underlined, however, is that historical evidence suggests that, even if mobility is halted, as was the case in postwar Poland, this may affect the timing but not the overall trend of the changes in migration patterns. Exogenous shocks will certainly affect migration in the short term – and probably the pace of the migration transition as well – but we do not expect them to significantly change the conclusions. The fact that fertility and natural increase rates observed since 2015 in Poland were lower than in the first stage of our projection, will probably lead to increased migration flows; indeed, higher (than predicted by this study) inflows were recorded even before the outburst of the war in Ukraine. Increased, even if temporarily, mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic is, in view of our model, going to have the same effect. Therefore, in all likelihood, the migration transition for Poland will be quicker than anticipated.

Notes

1. Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland.
2. Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Ireland, which had a negative migration balance until the mid-1990s, constitutes an important exception here.
3. Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
4. Although these are two distinct theories, in reference to historical developments taking place in European countries, we consider the SDT as the continuation of DT.
5. Although our considerations on MT do not refer to the US, we present this instructive example of a country with a positive net migration regime.
6. The studies by Moore (1945) and Davis (1963) also made explicit references to Poland.
7. In the same period, 189,500 persons arrived (registered for a permanent stay in Poland).
8. The scale of the flows visible in the registers and reported by Statistics Poland is very different from the scale of real, long- and short-term flows. See Annex 1 for details.
9. The dataset consisted of all EU countries as of 2015, extended by Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, as per the availability in the Eurostat database. This set of countries includes, on the one hand, the major migration destinations for emigrants from Eastern European countries and, on the other, all the major destination countries, for which the MT was described in the literature.
10. This extrapolation requires a careful recursive procedure as the migration forecast makes use of population characteristics in the future, which may only be calculated if the (future) migration flows are known.
11. The countries which have fewer data available are usually also those with less-reliable migration statistics; therefore, the fact that the panel is unbalanced does not seem to be a drawback – higher weights are attached to countries with more-reliable data.
12. We acknowledge that the values of the flows depend on the historical values of flows (in both directions). This autoregressive component enables not only the tracking of the MT phase but also the capturing of the 'hidden' effect of migration networks.
13. For instance, in 2015 the mean age was 40.8 in the overall population and 40.4 in the population aged 90 and younger whereas, in 2060, these values will be, according to the median scenario of the forecast, 47.7 and 46.4 respectively.
14. This conclusion is based on more-detailed results on age-specific growth rates and their components: changes in natality, mortality and migration (see Formula 2). Here we only present aggregate results.
15. From 2040 on, the contribution of the joint components of outflows (of nationals and foreigners) to the mean age change is at least 0.4 years (within a 5-year period) and exceeds the separate contributions of mortality and of natality.
16. From 2050 on, the contribution of the joint components of inflows (of nationals and foreigners) is at least 0.5 years (within a 5-year period) and exceeds the separate contributions of mortality and of natality.
17. In order to investigate the ageing process in Poland's entire net sending phase, we applied the same procedure to the period 1990–2060. Due to historical data constraints, this limited the analysis to the population aged 70 and younger (i.e. born after 1920). In this case, the outflow of Polish nationals primarily rejuvenates the population of origin between 2030 and 2050 and the general

trends are similar to those for the 2010–2060 period. These additional results are available on request.

18. Most likely – due to significant changes in the population size due to sharp increases in inflows.
19. Chesnais himself was probably not aware of Zelinsky's idea of 'vital and mobility transition'.

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Conflict of interest statement

No conflict of interest was reported by the Authors.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, Agnieszka Fihel, upon reasonable request.

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Annex 1. Data estimation and population forecast assumptions

Official statistics concerning the outflow from Poland include only persons who de-register from the place of permanent stay in Poland when moving to another country. As the legal obligation of deregistration has never been efficiently enforced, most migrants leave Poland without having fulfilled this formality. For instance, the most recent population census revealed that, in 2011, almost 1.6 million persons had been living abroad for at least one year without having deregistered from the place of permanent stay (Statistics Poland 2013). Therefore, we have estimated real mobility (for a thorough description see also Fihel *et al*. 2018) based on:

- estimates by Sakson (2002) of emigration in 1981–1988;
- population censuses of 2002 and 2011, regarding the numbers of persons staying abroad on a long-term basis (12 months and more), by year of departure from Poland (1988–2010) and the numbers of foreign citizens in Poland on long-term stays, by year of arrival (1989–2010); and
- Eurostat data (2017) that seem to properly account for long-term emigration and immigration without deregistering from/registering at the place of permanent stay in Poland since 2011.

As a result, our estimates of flows between 1989 and 2010 do not account for migrants who emigrated and subsequently returned to their home country within the same intercensal period. This implies some degree of underestimation of the scale of international migration to and from Poland. Nevertheless, our results remain comparable with other authors' results on flows (Wiśniowski 2017) and stocks (Statistics Poland 2013, 2018).

As our estimates of the mobility of Polish nationals allow for real but not necessarily official migration numbers, our estimates of the Polish population differ from those reported by Statistics Poland to international agencies, including the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. For instance, our estimate of the population as of 1 January 2015 is 36,263,000, instead of the 38,034,000 reported by the UN (as of 1 July 2015). The two main measures used to establish the population forecast assumptions, namely TFR and life expectancy at birth, were adjusted in accordance with our population estimates. For example, the recalculated TFR for the period of 2010–2014 amounts to 1.46, in contrast to the value of 1.33 reported by the UN. Similarly, female life expectancy at birth for the period of 2010–2014 was recalculated at 80.85, compared to the value of 81.14 used by the UN.

Annex 2. The migration forecast model

Our migration forecast is based on Eurostat data for 30 European countries for the years 1998–2014, with corrected data for Polish migration flows and population size (and the resulting demographic statistics). The panel is not balanced and the number of observations varies by country. In general, countries with more-reliable statistics (such as Sweden, Finland, the UK) have longer time series, while countries with less-reliable statistics (such as the eight new member states, NMS8) have much shorter data series available. This means that, in the modelling procedure, more weight is attached to countries with more-reliable statistics.

Prior to 2009, Eurostat data were not fully harmonised in terms of the adopted migration definitions, which leads to known biases and efforts to harmonise the data (cf. Raymer, Wiśniowski, Forster, Smith and Bijak 2013 for a review of empirical approaches). The results of these efforts were not unanimous, however. For example, the official statistics for emigration from Poland – which, in the Eurostat statistics, are by far the most biased, apart from emigration data for Slovakia to the UK for 2008 (De Beer, Raymer, van der Erf and van Wissen 2010) – stand at a value based on the register of approximately 9,000. This value has been recalculated by De Beer *et al.* (2010) to approximately 44,000 and Raymer *et al.* (2013) to approximately 82,000, while Abel (2010) estimated it at approximately 177 000. All of the recalculations involve adjusting the data for specific countries based on data from other countries but none take into consideration the specifics of the particular countries. Therefore, the results of the available harmonisation efforts do not seem reliable, either.

Having this in mind, we decided to base our model on the original statistics for all countries (apart from Poland), adding dummies to account for breaks in time-series definitions (which did not influence the forecast results). Due to the fact that we included autoregressive terms in the four equations (immigration and emigration rates for both foreigners and nationals), standard panel models could not be applied. We used the GMM Arellano Bond estimators instead. The fact that autoregressive terms were used also means that systematic multiplicative biases in data for different countries had less effect than they would otherwise have had.

The total sample consisted of 288 observations for flows of nationals and 320 for flows of foreigners, with N = 30 and T= 16. The estimated model coefficients, interpreted in the main body of the text, are presented in Table A1. For each of the four models, the Wald statistics of the null hypothesis that all the coefficients except the constant are zero was soundly rejected (p-value equal to 0) and the results of the Arellano Bond test for zero autocorrelation suggest that there is autocorrelation in first-error terms (which is expected for this type of model). Furthermore, there are no grounds to reject the null hypothesis of no autocorrelation for higher order terms (the p-values are 0.47 for the model for the immigration of foreigners, 0.41 for the emigration of foreigners, 0.3 for the emigration of nationals and 0.38 for the return of nationals), which means that there is no evidence of model misspecification.

Table A1. GMM Arellano Bond estimates for the rates of migration flows[1] (per 1,000 inhabitants)

Determinants	Coefficient	Std deviation	p-value
Emigration rate of nationals (Poles)			
Lagged value	0.3489	0.1083	0.001
Unemployment level in sending country (Poland)	0.2199	0.0979	0.025
GDP gap in sending country (Poland) relative to EU15 countries[2]	2.1726	1.1179	0.052
Constant	-0.2308	0.6550	0.725
Immigration rate of nationals (Poles)			
Lagged value	0.4879	0.1424	0.001
GDP growth rate in receiving country (Poland)	0.0220	0.0117	0.06
Rate of emigration of nationals (Poles from Poland)	-0.0553	0.0291	0.057
Lagged value of the rate of emigration of nationals (Poles from Poland)	0.1169	0.0207	0
EU15 country dummy – not applicable to Poland	*-0.1858*	*0.0940*	*0.048*
Constant	0.9016	0.4220	0.033
Immigration rate of foreigners			
Lagged value	0.4577	0.0704	0
Natural increase rate in receiving country (Poland)	-1.1857	0.3969	0.003
GDP *per capita* (in PPP) in receiving country (Poland)	0.0002	0.0000	0
GDP growth rate in receiving country (Poland)	0.0678	0.0421	0.108
Unemployment level in receiving country (Poland)	-0.3272	0.1196	0.006
OADR in receiving country (Poland)	-0.2900	0.1469	0.048
EU15 country dummy – not applicable to Poland	*0.9727*	*0.5561*	*0.08*
Constant	8.8556	3.5834	0.013
Emigration rate of foreigners			
Lagged value	0.2963	0.1243	0.017
Lagged value (two years) of the rate of immigration of foreigners	0.0616	0.0230	0.007
Constant	2.2100	0.6808	0.001

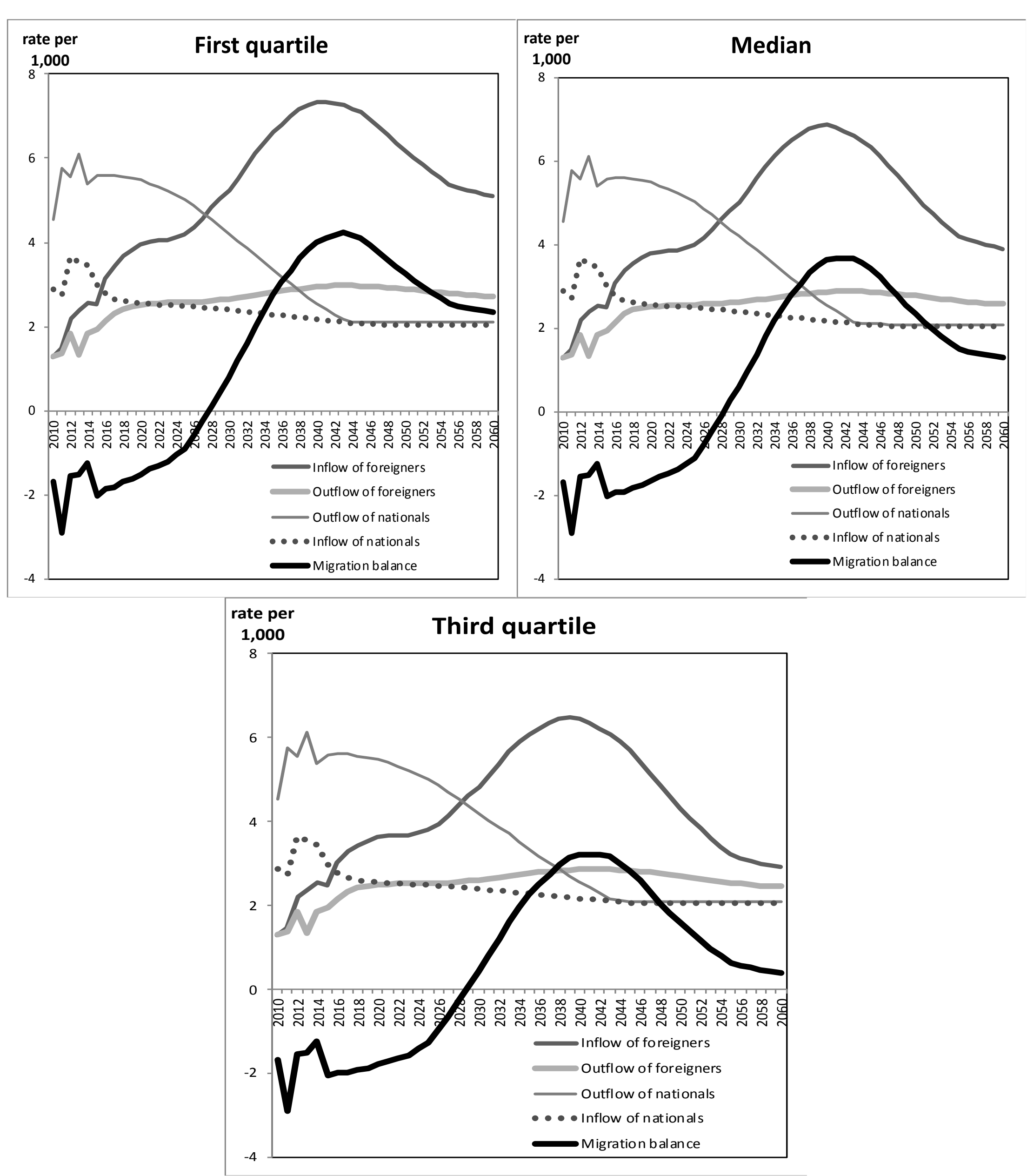
Source: Authors' own estimates based on Eurostat, OECD and Statistics Poland data.

Notes: [1] The coefficients in the model are calculated based on the full sample but the results (interpretation of dummy variables, types of flow) are presented as they were used for the forecast – i.e. for Poland; [2] 'EU15 countries' refers to the 15 EU member states prior to the 2004 EU enlargement: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

In order to obtain a forecast, the rates of migration flows need to be translated to numbers of individuals in specific age categories. The sex-specific age structures of migrants are different for the four types of migration flow considered but fixed for the whole forecast period. The age structures are based on migration flows for the years 2006–2011 as registered in the 2011 Polish census. The adopted migration modelling framework is deterministic and the levels of flows depend on current demographic and economic variables, This means that, in order to provide a migration forecast, a demographic forecast is needed and *vice versa*. Therefore, in order to obtain a full population forecast, a joint computation of population and the corresponding migration forecasts were calculated in an iterative procedure, obtaining internal consistency. Due to the fact that the fertility and mortality components of the forecast were modelled in a Bayesian framework, a different migration path is to be observed for each population forecast trajectory. Below we present three migration

forecasts, corresponding to the first, second (median) and third quartiles of the fertility/mortality forecasts (Figure A1). The patterns visible for the three trajectories are the same.

Figure A1. Migration rates per 1,000 inhabitants corresponding to the first, second (median) and third quartiles of the population forecast,[1] Poland



Source: Authors' own estimates based on Eurostat, OECD and Statistics Poland data.

Notes: [1] The period of 2010–2014 refers to observed migration rates, whereas the period 2015–2016 refers to the forecast.

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