Poland is an ethnically homogeneous country, and traditional foreign national groups are those originating from the bordering countries, and in recent years also from the European Union. The immigrant population from Asia for many years has been dominated by the Vietnamese, quite well organized and integrated. Chinese immigration to Poland does not have a long history. Among all the groups of a foreign origin in Poland, the Chinese are of a relatively small number, around 2.5 percent. Despite that, a rapid development may be observed in last few decades. The presence of this national group is visible in clusters, mainly in Warsaw and some other cities, where the branches of Chinese enterprises are located. Only individuals have settled outside these centres. Due to the short history of migration and a relatively low level of integration with the host society, the Chinese have not created a stable organization nor active institutions that would support their functioning in the new country. The following text is an attempt to describe the size and the forms of immigration, settlement structure, and rare organizations in which they operate. It was also intended to outline the prospects for the future development of this national group in Poland on the basis of the existing forms of cohabitation.

Overview of the Chinese immigration to Poland

Historically, Central and Eastern Europe wasn’t a traditional destination for the Chinese immigration. In the pre-war period, the number of the Chinese in Central Europe was negligible (Nyiri, 2007, p. 29). In the

1 The article was a result of the research project “Socio-cultural identification of foreigners”, led by prof. Jacek Schmidt (UAM).
first decades after Second World War, there was no growth either as only individuals were arriving there, such as for instance the exchange students. The Chinese arrived in this part of Europe in larger groups in 1989–1991, mainly due to the abolition of Hungarian visas. As a result, in very short period of time in that country the number of the Chinese rose to 40,000 (Nyiri, 2007, p. 54). Later, many of them re-emigrated to Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania. After the tightening of visa policy in Hungary, new destinations emerged: Romania and the Czech Republic (also as a trail of transfer to Western Europe), and subsequently Slovenia, Poland, Albania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Lithuania. The number of the Chinese in Central and Eastern Europe can be estimated at around 50,000 (Nyiri, 2007, p. 137). They are mainly businesspersons, characterized by their high intensity of contacts with the country of origin and the relatively high mobility between countries of the region. This is one of the reasons, why it is difficult to assess the number of the Chinese population.

Until the beginning of the 21st century very few people of the Chinese nationality were arriving to Poland. According to Polish data, in 1999 there were only 617 Chinese living in Poland; 462 of them had temporary residence permits, and 155 had settlement permit/permanent residence permit (Grzymała-Kazłowska et al., 2002, p. 118). More dynamic development of Chinese immigration to Poland would start after the access to the European Union in 2004.

Data from the Central Statistical Office, the Border Guard and the Police present a rough idea of the size of the Chinese population in Poland. The Chinese population in the last few years may be estimated between 5 to 8 thousand people, who were staying in Poland on the basis of valid residence permits of different kinds. For instance, in January 2015, the number presented by The Office for Foreigners was 4782 Chinese (Urząd do spraw Cudzoziemców, 2015a). These data, however, are incomplete, because it is not determined how many foreigners remained in the country without permits or visas, and how many might have been smuggled across the borders. 2015 mid-year data shows that the Chinese population with valid documents confirming the right of residence on the territory of Poland is nearly 5,000 people, accounting for 2.5 percent of the foreigners. That makes them the eighth largest ethnic minority group in Poland, after the Ukrainians, Germans, Russians, Belarusians, Vietnamese, Italians, and the French (Urząd do spraw Cudzoziemców, 2015b). Although this number is much lower than other, far more numerous groups, last several years’ growth rate was fast, and the population has doubled since 2009. In addition, a growing number of the Chinese people receive visas for Poland.
Statistical data on the immigrants from China are often incomplete, as for many years they were not recognized by data collectors as a separate category distinctive from “the Asians”. In some other data of the Central Statistical Office, Chinese from the Peoples Republic of China are counted together with the citizens of Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. In 2009, the Chinese from the PRC were five times more numerous than the immigrants from Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan together: 2600 PRC citizens, 516 Taiwanese, and only 5 Hongkongers (Fundacja Rozwoju “Oprócz Granic”, 2009, p. 41).

For comparison, preliminary data of the Office for Foreigners for mid-year 2015, shows that the number of the Chinese is growing, but number of the Taiwanese is much smaller. Therefore, the ratio of the Chinese to Taiwanese was 26:1. In total, as of July 1, 2015:

- 4907 Chinese (494 permanent residence, 505 long-term EU residence, 3854 temporary residence, 35 residence for a family member of an EU citizen, 8 refugee status, 1 subsidiary protection, 4 humanitarian stay, and 4 tolerated stay);
- 186 Taiwanese (17 permanent residence, 15 long-term EU residence, 153 temporary residence, 1 residence for a family member of an EU citizen);
- 11 Hongkongers (1 permanent residence, 2 long-term EU residence, 8 temporary residence, 1 residence for a family member of an EU citizen) (Urząd do spraw Cudzoziemców, 2015b).
The growth prospects of the Chinese arrivals to Poland is also shown by the number of invitations issued for the citizens of China: in the period of 2004–2006 total 318 invitations were issued (Departament Polityki Migracyjnej, 2008, p. 36), while a few years later, in 2013, the number increased to 1,010 per one year, and in 2014 to 1,104 invitations.

The number of the Chinese citizens who have received permission for a long-term residence has been significantly increased, as presented on the Graph 3. In 2014, it was 159 people, while a decade earlier only two ( Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2013, p. 484). The number of the Chinese, who received the other forms of permits is also increasing.

The Chinese seldom apply for Polish citizenship. For example, in 1992–2006 the President of the Republic of Poland has granted Polish citizenship to only 57 people of Chinese origin (Departament Polityki Migracyjnej, 2008, p. 39).

The total number of visas issued in the Polish consular offices in China is generally increasing. It is a result of a raise of interest in Poland amongst the Chinese entrepreneurs, investors, tourists, and students (Departament Konsularny, 2011, p. 20; Departament Konsularny, 2012, p. 21). A visible development in the number of travellers to Poland and to the other CCE countries as part of a group organized tourism (ADS), as well as within individual tourism is observed. Undoubtedly, Poland is better recognized among Chinese tourists than it was a few years ago (Departament
It is estimated, that a significant proportion (even about 50 percent) of all arrivals is on the visa-free basis. This may apply to approximately 8 million holders of service passports, issued by

**Graph 3:** Number of permits for long-term resident granted to the Chinese people in Poland in the years 2005–2014.
Source: Urząd do spraw Cudzoziemców, raports from 2005 to 2015.

**Graph 4:** Number of residence permits for a fixed period of time granted to the Chinese people in Poland in the years 1998–2013

a few dozens of government institutions in the PRC (Departament Polityki Konsularnej, 2008, p. 36). In 2014, the new Consulate General in Chengdu was added to the ones already existing in Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Hong Kong (Departament Konsularny, 2014, p. 5).

It seems that the most Chinese living in Poland depend on the settlement of legal status, if only because of the physical stand out from the local environment, which results in controls of documents by the police. The Chinese, who are staying illegally in Poland, can legalize their status as part of the abolition: foreigners can apply to obtain a permit for temporary residence for 2 years and the possibility of legal employment. During the first abolition action in 2003, only 13 Chinese nationals applied for the permits (Departament Polityki Migracyjnej, 2008, p. 45), in 2007: 42 persons, while in 2012: 482 Chinese applied for the permits (Departament Polityki Migracyjnej, 2012, pp. 34–35). From the increasing number of applications we can come to the conclusion, that undetermined number of Chinese people of the status of illegal immigrants still remain on Polish territory. Nevertheless, relatively marginal number of the Chinese are expelled every year – only around 10 of them. The Chinese are the ninth national group in that category, counting less than 2 per cent of the foreigners obliged to leave Poland. In the last few years the number of Chinese citizens detained by the Border Guard for illegal crossing or attempting to cross the state border counts for around 20 per year. Interestingly, the majority has been stopped at the internal border of the European Union, mostly with Germany (Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców, 2015a).

**Forms of migration and settlement structure**

The oldest wave of Chinese immigration, associated with the enterprise of Chipolbrok, has focused on the coast (Gdańsk, Gdynia). Some of them were Chinese students, who studied in Poland in the sixties, and returned after the Cultural Revolution. At the turn of the eighties and nineties a relatively well-educated entrepreneurs from Eastern China arrived to Poland. Sometimes, they were founding the enterprises in two or three CEE countries, or were taking over the regional branches of the previously state-owned companies, using a network of contacts. Since the late nineties contract workers were employed on construction sites, and in restaurants, as well as centers of Chinese medicine (Wysieńska, 2012, pp. 88–89). Statistical data do not consist any information on the education level of 2/3 of the newly arrived Chinese. After the accession to the EU, Poland became more attractive for Chinese businesspersons,
also those who arrived not directly from China, but from other countries in the region, such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, the countries of the former Yugoslavia (Wysieńska & Pilat, 2012, p. 105).

Similarly as in the case of Chinese immigrants, in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Chinese have been concentrating in the capital city and surrounding areas of Mazowieckie voivodship. In 2013, the vast majority (3305 people, that is 66 percent) of Chinese people lived in Warsaw and the rest of the Mazowieckie voivodship. Rest of them lived in: Śląskie voivodship (340 Chinese), Pomorskie (199), Wielkopolskie (195), Dolnośląskie (175), Małopolskie (174), Łódzkie (165), Warmińsko-Mazurskie (105), Zachodniopomorskie (76), Kujawsko-Pomorskie (62), Lubuskie (59), Lubelskie (50), Świętokrzyskie (33), Opolskie and Podkarpackie (25 each), and Podlaskie (22 Chinese citizens) (Urzędo Spraw Cudzoziemców, 2014). Most of them live in the cities, although there are no districts inhabited mainly by the Chinese or having a form of Chinatowns.

Nevertheless, the concentrations of the Chinese population can be identified in several centers related to economic activity. This is primarily Lesznowola, a municipality with a large Chinese Trade Center located in Wólka Kosowska. Other important clusters are Gdańsk and Gdynia, Jaworzno-Jelenia Góra, Bydgoszcz, Stalowa Wola (Deloitte, 2012).

Migration networks play a very important role in supporting migrants informally. Many migrants aim to return to the country. Migration is rather individual, however, there are cases of inviting family members and employing them in small Chinese companies (Klaus, 2011, p. 42; Rossa, 2011, p. 182).

In the last few years, the number of the Chinese working in Poland is slightly decreasing, but it is still much higher than at the end of 20th century. In 2014, some 2133 PRC citizens received the work permits; 89 percent received A-type permit, which allows to work in the Polish territory on the basis of a contract with an employer, whose registered business is also located in Poland. Around 7 percent of the Chinese work on the basis of type C permit, which allows to work for a foreign employer and deployment in Polish territory for over 30 days in a the calendar year (Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, 2015).

---

2 Chinese Trade Center in Wólka Kosowska in Lesznowola municipality is located at the exit road from Warsaw to Kraków and Katowice. It was established in 1994, and has become the most important center of wholesale trade of goods imported from China, such as clothing, leather, footwear, toys, home furnishings, etc. Three largest halls (out of six) were financed by the Chinese, and the remaining ones by the Vietnamese, citizens of Turkey and India. About 1,000 tenants rent shops there. It is the largest shopping center of this type of in Central and Eastern Europe (Klorek & Szulecka, 2013; Pilat, 2013).
Table 1: Work permits received by the PRC citizens, divided by profession categories. Data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Business owners</th>
<th>Specialist, experts</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Skilled workers</th>
<th>Unskilled workers</th>
<th>IT specialists</th>
<th>Medical workers</th>
<th>Artists</th>
<th>Lawyers</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Refusals</th>
<th>Permits repealed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>4040</td>
<td>2040</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1145</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1558</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>4536</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2072</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>6209</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1045</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1154</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>5854</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>2824</td>
<td>N/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>3247</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>N/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>3089</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>N/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>2133</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>N/D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The wholesale and retail trade dominate among the sectors of employment of the Chinese citizens (about 1/3 a few years ago, and over 2/3 in the last three years). Relatively many work in the construction sector, and in 2010–2011, every fifth citizen of China in Poland was employed there, which was connected with the activity of the Chinese companies, especially in the construction of highways (which, by the way, was unsuccessful, and reduced the level of confidence in Chinese companies). Hotels and restaurants have employed relatively few Chinese people – this number varies from 5 to 10 percent. The number of employees working in the manufacturing sector decreased from about 30 percent in 2008 to 2 percent in 2014. Approximately every fourth citizen of the PRC in Poland has been employed as a member of management, often in small Chinese companies.

The Chinese opt for self-employment and work in small businesses – for instance, according to data from the years 2008 and 2009, about 55 percent are employed in enterprises employing up to 9 people (Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, 2010). These are usually the companies whose owners are also of Chinese nationality. A high level of intranational economic cooperation is observed, for example, the owners of
Chinese travel agencies cooperate with the restaurants and hotels owned by other Chinese. The roots of this practice lie on the one hand, in the national solidarity, and on the other hand, in the attempt to avoid cultural barriers between the Chinese tourists and local companies.

Relatively few Chinese are interested in seasonal work in Poland, which is primarily due to the high cost of tickets between Poland and China, but also the communication problems, as lower-level staff cannot speak Polish, nor English. In 2009, only 41 visas for seasonal work were granted to the Chinese citizens (including 29 Schengen visas and 12 national), which can be compared to 4073 visas issued without work permission (including 2896 Schengen visas and 1177 Polish ones) (Krajowy Punkt Kontaktowy Europejskiej Sieci Migracyjnej, 2011, p. 43).

Chinese ethnic group is very flexible and prone to change their place of residence – both in China and abroad – if the situation requires that, or, if new business opportunities appear. Moreover, the low level of integration with the host society makes it even easier.

Table 2: Work permits received by the PRC citizens, divided by sectors of the economy. Data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing</th>
<th>Manufacturing sector</th>
<th>Construction sector</th>
<th>Wholesale and retail trade</th>
<th>Transportation and storage</th>
<th>Hotels and restaurants</th>
<th>Information and communication</th>
<th>Finance and insurance</th>
<th>Professional, scientific and technical sector</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Healthcare</th>
<th>Workers employed in private households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>207*</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>207*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>1766</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>653*</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>N/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>1266</td>
<td>2084</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>2546</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>2318</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>2177</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>N/D</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1439</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* and real estate services

Special category: Chinese students in Poland

The number of Chinese studying in Poland is constantly growing. In the fifties, ten students from China came to Poland, later the number of Chinese students increased to about fifty. In the seventies, there were only a few people, because most of them were called back to China after the Cultural Revolution had begun. There is no institution that would assemble Chinese graduates of Polish universities – in 2013 Dom Polski (Polish House Club) proposed the creation of the Polish Universities Chinese Alumni Club and the Chinese Universities Polish Alumni Club, which would lobby for improvement of Polish-Chinese relations. The activities of these institutions are not yet visible. For a decade now, a promotional campaign “Study in Poland” addressed to young people in China has been run. At the same time, many Polish universities promoted their educational offer in English in China, in cooperation with the agencies recruiting Chinese students abroad or during educational fairs held in major Chinese cities. It should also be noted, that student visas are sometimes used as a path of illegal immigration not only to Poland, but also through Poland to other Schengen countries.

In the academic year 2013/2014, 670 students from the PRC and 413 from Taiwan studied in Poland (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2016, p. 505). As the Graph 5 shows, we can observe the growing tendency among Chinese candidates and decreasing among Taiwanese.³

In the academic year 2012/2013, students from the PRC and Taiwan together accounted for only 3.7 percent of foreign students in Poland, and in the year 2013/2014 even slightly less, 3 percent, due to the significant increase in the number of students from Ukraine. At the same time, they were the largest group amongst the students from Asia. If we count jointly students from China and Taiwan (total 1083), they would be the sixth national group – after the citizens of Ukraine, Belarus, Norway, Spain, and Sweden. If we consider Chinese students from the PRC alone, they would be less numerous not only than the above national groups, but also students from Lithuania, the United States, the Czech Republic, Russia, and Germany.

As non-European Union students, the Chinese pay the highest tuition fees, but, because of much higher costs of the higher education in West-

³ After the accession to the European Union, the Taiwanese started to arrive at the medical schools in Poland. In 2011, about 300 Taiwanese studied medicine at the Medical University in Poznań, 30 percent of all foreign students of the university. They also studied in Katowice and Lodz. A significant reduction in the number of students from Taiwan was caused by factors unrelated to the Polish side, as the graduates of Taiwanese medical schools mobilized in defense of the labor market. After the change in legislation in 2012, nostrification of diplomas has been much more difficult, resulting in decline in the interest in medical studies in Poland.
ern Europe and America, the number of Chinese students in Poland is rising. This trend is expected to continue, especially if the Polish universities would be able to offer attractive curricula in English. Currently, the vast majority of young Chinese choose universities in English-speaking countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia). In Poland, technical studies are the dominant fields of interest. With the popularity of Chopin’s music in Asia, relatively many students choose Poland to study at the academies of music.

Educational cooperation between Poland and China is gradually being developed. During the official visit to China in December 2011, President Bronisław Komorowski and the Minister of Science and Higher Education, Barbara Kudrycka, signed an interdepartmental agreement on cooperation in the field of higher education. The agreement concerned the exchange of students (a slight increase in the scholarship exchange limit, to up to 40 per year) scientists networking, as well as joint research. Promotion of Polish language teaching in China and Chinese in Poland were also planned (Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego, 2011). Currently, Polish studies in China are conducted at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, and Harbin Normal University. Chinese students of Polish philology are primarily the candidates for scholarships to Poland.

Most of the Chinese students come back to China after graduation. Some undertake higher education at other European universities, for instance in Germany. Global trends are evident: since the history of the Chinese studying abroad began (in early eighties), the proportion

---

**Graph 5:** The number of Chinese and Taiwanese studying in Poland from the academic years 2000/2001 to 2013/2014

Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2016, p. 505.
of the graduates returning to homeland is growing, as those who know foreign languages and have experience in an international environment, may find much more attractive professional opportunities in China than abroad (Sun & Liang, 2014).

Forms of organization

Within the Chinese community in Poland there are mainly informal groups, created on the basis of common interests (e.g. students, entrepreneurs). Some of these societies, especially of the older immigration, meet at the events organized by the Embassy of the PRC, for instance on the National Day or the Chinese New Year celebrations. The bonds are held primarily among the people from the similar waves of immigration or the same province of origin. Socializing is connected with meeting people’s cultural needs (such as festivals), economic and professional (exchange of information, for example about employment opportunities, official procedures, assistance in translation), as well as cooking, or, generally speaking, supporting each other. These migration networks are not formalized. There are also Chinese (and often Vietnamese) entrepreneurs, providing goods and services for other Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants, for instance Asian food ingredients. Chinese students and teachers from Polish universities maintain intensive contacts with Chinese students in other European countries, contacting not only by internet social networks, but also visiting each other or traveling during the holidays.

Nevertheless, forms of social, political, economic, cultural organization, as well as any other institutions are rudimentary. In Poland, there are virtually no formal and actually active Chinese immigrant organizations focused on helping each other. The probable cause is that the history of immigration to Poland is too short.

The Chinese-Polish Joint Stock Shipping Company Chipolbrok, operating since 1951, played an important historical role in the development of Polish-Chinese relations. Chipolbrok has supported the Polish-Chinese cultural and educational projects, like the organization of the Polish school in Shanghai or publishing a magazine “Asia-Pacific” (in Polish).

In Poland, there are several institutions that promote cultural cooperation between Poland and China, but it’s mostly the Poles working in them, and the activities are prepared rather for the local audience. The oldest organization of this type is Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Chińskiej (TPPCh, the Association of Polish-Chinese Friendship, www.tppch.pl).
The Association was founded in the 50s of the 20th century (Góralczyk, 2008, pp. 232–237; Cyrzyk, 2008, pp. 238–245). It has been dealing mainly with cultural activities, organizing concerts, film screenings, exhibitions, lectures, Chinese lessons, publishing. Currently, it has formally nine regional offices: Warsaw, Kraków, Wielkopolska (Greater Poland), Bydgoszcz, Poznań, Śląsk (Silesia), Toruń, Zachodniopomorskie (West Pomeranian), and Pomorskie (Pomeranian), but they are not all active. The number of members can be estimated at several hundred people all together, the vast majority are Polish and the members of Polish-Chinese families. Occasionally, a number Chinese entrepreneurs or Oriental restaurant owners take part in the activities. In the times of its greatest development, branches of TPPCh existed in all voivodships, and had approximately 20 thousand members. Approximately one hundred organizations and companies were supporting its work, and it was financed from the state budget. The association had very prestigious headquarters in Blue Palace in Warsaw, hosting a club, library and a Chinese bar, organized lectures and Chinese lessons. TPPCh cooperated with a similar organization in China: the Association of Chinese-Polish Friendship. In the years 1964–1984, as a result of the relations between China and the Soviet Union cooling, the activity froze, but the organization has not been disbanded. In the mid-eighties the association was reactivated. In that time Klub Harbinczyków was also called into existence, gathering Poles repatriated from Harbin to Poland in the fifties and sixties. Again, in the second half of the nineties there was another collapse, caused by the interruption in funding from the budget and the loss of the Blue Palace location. Since that time, the Association focuses on low-profile cultural activities.

There are also some other cultural associations (for example Stowarzyszenie Polsko-Chińskie na Rzecz Kultury i Sztuki, Polish-Chinese Association for Culture and Arts), or business organizations, like Polsko-Chińskie Towarzystwo Gospodarczo-Kulturalne (Polish-Chinese Economic and Cultural Association), Polsko-Chińska Izba Gospodarcza (Polish-Chinese Chamber of Commerce), Polsko-Chińska Izba Przemysłowo-Handlowa (Polish-Chinese Chamber of Industry and Commerce), Stowarzyszenie Polsko-Chińskiej Promocji Ekonomicznej i Handlowej (Association of Polish-Chinese Economic and Trade Promotion). There are language schools in larger cities, employing native-speakers of the Chinese language, and occasionally engaging in the organization of cultural events.

Confucius Institutes, located in Kraków, Opole, Poznań, Wrocław, and Gdańsk, have been the most active cultural institutions promoting Chinese culture in the last decade. Although Confucius Institutes are not intended to support the Chinese community in Poland, they remain in
touch with them, and the local Chinese communities participate in the cultural events (especially the Chinese New Year celebrations) as well as in the scientific events (conferences, open lectures), organized by these institutions. Sometimes, the local Chinese are employed as teachers or administrative staff. Institutes however; mostly employ teachers, who are being sent directly from China to Poland for 1–3-year contracts. In the academic year 2015/2016, the largest number of those native speakers (seven) are employed in the CI of the Jagiellonian University. There are, nevertheless, various experiences with the local Chinese communities within the network of 500 Confucius Institutes in the world: in the case of the institutes operating in countries with more numerous Chinese diaspora, institutes serve to the local Chinese as educational institutions, in which the second or the third generation of the Chinese learn Mandarin, or organize bilingual schools (in Italy, Hungary). Polish CIs do not fulfil this function yet, but perhaps in the future, along with the growth of the Chinese diaspora, these needs would arise.

When it comes to the institutions that would be established by the Chinese people for themselves, there are only few, and not really active. The first is Polskie Stowarzyszenie Chińczyków (the Polish Association of the Chinese), located in Wólka Kosowska, which was registered in 2006. The second, Stowarzyszenie Przedsiębiorców Chińskich w Polsce w Jaworznie (the Chinese Association of Entrepreneurs in Poland in Jaworzno), was also registered, but in reality it does not work.

There have been some attempts to involve Chinese community in religious activities, like the Chinese section of the Evangelical Reformed Ministry of Immigrants in Warsaw. In 2009, the section had about 30 members and 10 supporters. The activities focused on the Sunday services, religious meetings and social events. Representatives of the section were also in contact with Chinese Christians, staying in the Guarded Centre for Foreigners in Lesznowola near Grójec. Jehovah’s Witnesses also propose the Chinese immigrants participation in the religious meetings in Wólka Kosowska and in Kraków.

It seems that the most active institution bringing the Chinese together is in the Internet: the portal www.plchinese.com. The website provides current news from Poland, tourists information, but mostly some practical information, instructing on visas, residence permits, work permits, diploma nostrification procedures. It also provides an information board to exchange the real estate announcements. A separate section of the Chinese cultural events in Poland is provided. This website serves also as a forum of exchange of experiences between the students, Polish-Chinese marriages, and opinions on the Polish people and realities. This website performs the functions of both formal and informal organizations.
The level of integration of the Chinese with the Polish society is quite low so far. Avoiding the efforts of learning Polish language seems to be a result of temporariness and transience of their status, and a rare intention of a permanent settlement in this country. Many of the Chinese manage to live in Poland without speaking Polish. Their school-age children often return to China for the primary and secondary education, and other attend school at the Embassy of the PRC in Warsaw. Even most of the Chinese students do not learn Polish language, because they find it too difficult and pointless, as the language of their curriculum is English, relations with their Polish peers are random, and they just have no plans to stay in Poland. Poland is not treated as a country of final destination of migration, and a further aim is to either migrate to the Western countries, or eventually – after graduation or collecting the expected capital – to return to China.

Little integration and a lack of knowledge of the Polish language makes the Chinese more willing to cooperate with the Vietnamese, who have a wider network of business contacts, thanks to a long tradition of living in Poland as well as their Polish language proficiency – mainly in second generation (Mroczek, Szulecka & Tulińska, 2008, pp. 190–191). Typically, the Chinese deal with the import of goods from China, because they have better guanxi there, while the Vietnamese dominate the retail trade (Klorek & Szulecka, 2013, pp. 54–56). Between these two communities conflicts sometimes break out, mainly on the economic basis, like disputes concerning rent increases in the Chinese Trade Center in Wólka Kosowska (Pytlakowski & Sowa, 2011).

There is no history of serious conflicts between the Chinese community and the local Polish inhabitants. The observed social isolation of immigrants is a kind of conflict-free strategy for their adaptation, especially in case of those, who do not plan to settle in Poland. The potential conflict area appears when the Chinese entrepreneurs employ the Poles – which concerns usually the positions where Polish proficiency, efficiency in the legal or bureaucratic realities are required – especially in direct contact with Polish customers, as salespeople or waiters. The offers in the Job Centers in some regions for people with proficiency in Chinese and English can give the impression that it is a way to obtain approval for the employment of a compatriot, rather than to find a local employee (Jóźwiak, 2012, p. 149). For example, in Piaseczno county in 2011 and 2012, 44 percent of the jobs contained a requirement of Chinese or Vietnamese
language (Klorek & Szulecka, 2013, p. 38). The tension between the local population and Chinese entrepreneurs can occur where there is a business competition (Piłat, 2013, p. 5). Chinese entrepreneurs also report that the public institutions are inhospitable, that the procedures for obtaining permits are overly complicated and restrictive (Karpiński, 2012, p. 166). In addition, the Polish criminal groups may heighten unfavorable climate, impersonating representatives of the state institutions and extorting money.

Number of the Chinese among the foreigners suspected of committing crimes, and among the victims is limited. A small number of reports of crime victims may be a result of their reluctance to cooperate with the police, fear of complicated, time-consuming procedures and difficulties in communication. The number of people of the Chinese origin in police statistics has never exceeded 1 percent of all foreigners (Policja, 2013). It seems that in Poland, at least so far, the most widespread law abuses within this national category are fiscal: failing to register part of the business and illegal employment.

One of the evidences of effective integration would be Chinese-Polish marriages, as in the cases of such marriages, international social contacts are more complex than for the average Chinese living in Poland. Unfortunately, even in recent years the number of such marriages is negligible, a few per year. In addition, it is difficult to assess what part of them is only a result of a need to legalize the immigrant’s status. Cultural differences may also be amongst the reasons for a small amount of Polish-Chinese marriages. In the discussion about the Polish men as potential husband candidates, on the plchinese.com forum, the opinions varied. Polish men were praised for courtesy, respect for women, caring for the house as well as for the accountability. But there were critical opinions on the culinary customs (too little fruits and vegetables), shorter life, addictions, infidelity and lack of stability in feelings, uncivilized behavior under the influence of alcohol, lack of habit of saving, and lack of tolerance for different cultures.4

Certainly, not only the Chinese side is responsible for the lack of deeper integration. Even in Lesznowola, which is inhabited by such a large Chinese minority, there were very little efforts to support the integration of foreigners. Municipal authorities organized Polish language classes and some intercultural events for them. In the years 2007 and 2008, the municipal schools conducted the “My neighbors come from Asia” project, during which a psychologist conducted intercultural workshops for pupils about the differences between Polish and Asian culture (Klorek

Poland, as a significant country in Central and Eastern Europe is becoming increasingly interesting for the Chinese. It is not only becoming more and more alluring tourist destination, but also a destination for those looking for a long-term settlement. Undoubtedly, Chinese entrepreneurs are attracted by an economic development, investment opportunities, relatively low labor costs and well-educated employees. The pragmatic Chinese appreciate the strategic geographic position of the country, and the privileges of membership in the European Union and the Schengen area. For Chinese students, the possibility to study in a European country, in English, with tuition and living expenses lower than the Western Europe, or even lower than in China, is a serious advantage. Those who came to know Poland better, generally appreciate the nature, culture and tradition, as well as the hospitality. Generally, however, little knowledge among the Chinese people about Poland, coexists with little knowledge of China among the Poles.

As a result of the previous analysis it can be expected that in the years to come, the number of the Chinese arriving to Poland will be increasing, and that at present, we are witnessing only an early stage of the development of Chinese immigration. Certainly in the future more study of this phenomenon would be needed.

 References


