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# The Impact of Migration on Poland

EU Mobility and  
Social Change

<sup>4</sup>**UCLPRESS**

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 **UCL**PRESS



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# How are countries affected by migration?

*An ‘inside-out’ approach to change in sending and receiving countries*

ANNE WHITE

In December 2016, Polish television broadcast an advertisement for Allegro, an online shopping site. The advertisement features Robert, a pensioner, purchasing *English for Beginners* and practising basic words and sentences on the tram and in the bath. Robert then travels to the United Kingdom for Christmas and greets a small mixed-race girl who comes to the door, with the words ‘Hello, I’m your grandpa.’ The video was watched by millions around the world and was the most popular Youtube film of the year in Poland, where a journalist for a leading newspaper claimed that ‘it would be hard to find a Pole who hadn’t seen it’ (Wątor 2017). The film depicted a poignantly familiar situation in a society where almost everyone has family and friends abroad. It was somehow also puzzling, given widespread stereotypes that older people are passive victims of migration and, moreover, do not learn foreign languages.

This book is, as far as we know, the first with the title ‘The Impact of Migration on Country X’, and is the most ambitious attempt to date to understand how migration influences social change in a specific sending country. It is not a historical study of migration’s cumulative effect on Poland, but, as the reference to EU mobility in the subtitle suggests, an exploration of how Poland today is changing. We consider some overall economic trends, but are particularly interested in how and why Polish society is evolving and how this is, to some extent, because migration affects Poles in their everyday lives. Although we do not try to answer the question of the extent to which social change is caused by migration,

migration rarely seems to be the main factor. However, once one begins to investigate, it seems there are many social trends which are reinforced – or in other cases held back – as a result of migration. For example, we present figures showing that more and more retired Poles are in adult education, and that active English-language knowledge has been increasing overall in the Polish population and even in older age groups. One reason is that – as we know from our own and other researchers’ interviews and participant observation – grandparents are indeed learning foreign languages to communicate with family members abroad.

Our book is unusual, as a work of migration scholarship, for its emphasis not on migrants but on stayers – people, like Robert, who live in sending countries but who also inhabit transnational social spaces, with multiple reference points thanks to their communications with people abroad and visits to foreign countries. Moreover, Polish society has been filling up with a particularly significant type of stayer: return migrants. According to survey data, 12 per cent of Poles resident in Poland have worked abroad in the last ten years, including 27 per cent of 25–34 year olds (Cybulska 2016, 1). Social change also occurs thanks to the addition of these returnees, changing the composition of society in Poland. For example, as discussed in chapter 8, the number of Poles in Poland who know openly gay people or Muslims (neither often encountered in Poland) has considerably increased in recent years.

The book identifies a number of important trends in Poland, taking into account imperfections in the data, complexities with regard to which subgroups of society are changing, and the presence of counter-trends. In each case we explore why these trends might be occurring, and consider how migration fits into this picture. The book also probes into deeper types of change: not just changing practices, but also the norms, beliefs and even values that can change as a result of those changing practices. For example, an important trend in Poland, as elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), is towards more meaningful rights for women and minorities than existed under the communist regime. Gender equality is one of these, although it has received notable setbacks in Poland recently. Nonetheless, an accumulation of practices linked to migration do promote the underlying trend towards more equal gender roles. One example is rising numbers of women drivers in very recent years. In 2007, 30 per cent of women had a driving licence. In 2015, the figure was 48 per cent (Panek, Czapiński and Kotowska 2007, 42; 2015, 34). This trend towards ‘motor-parity’ (Bąk 2012) has many causes, but in small towns where many men are working abroad, the increase is especially noticeable (Kurczewski and Fuszara 2012, 92–3).

The book is deliberately broad in scope. A comprehensive account of migration impact on any country would be impossible, but our aim is to cover as many facets as space permits, keeping an eye out particularly for influences which may be contributing to key social trends. These, as discussed below, are trends which we identify as being especially significant in contemporary CEE. In other words, by keeping in mind at all times our aim of explaining certain social phenomena, we create a robust framework of analysis which helps us keep our potentially unwieldy mass of migration influences from spilling out in disorder.

Except in [chapter 5](#), on labour market impacts, we depart from the conventional framework of analysis which, in utilitarian fashion, considers only social impacts that can be divided into ‘bad’ (e.g. brain drain and care drain) or ‘good’ (e.g. investment in education thanks to economic remittances, and knowledge transfer from receiving to sending countries). Scholars tend to conceptualise such influences as promoting or impeding development, and the overarching concept of development does impart a certain solidity to such cost-benefit framings of the topic. However, a ‘migration-development nexus’ is usually perceived to exist only in non-European countries or, exceptionally, in south-east Europe, not countries like Poland. This is not to deny that migration plays a role in economic development locally in some parts of Poland and could play more of a role in the future; we hope that our book will be useful to policy-makers in this regard. However, since our aim is to achieve a wide-ranging account, a developmental lens is insufficient because it maintains a narrow normativity which renders many kinds of impact invisible to the researcher. Rather than proceeding from a mental list of development goals and thinking how migration could be a tool to their achievement, our analysis, by contrast, is ‘inside-out’ because we look inside a changing society first, and then outwards into the transnational social space in which that society is located.

The originality of our approach to social change in sending countries is curious, in view of the fact that one part of migration scholarship – migration economics – does already sometimes pursue an ‘inside-out’ approach. Economists of both sending and receiving countries pursue a counterfactual (‘what if?’) approach to calculate, for example, the extent to which economic remittances may be contributing to overall GDP growth, or how the departure or arrival of workers affect overall trends on labour markets – for example, as one factor contributing to falling unemployment in the sending country. Demographers, by the nature of their topic, inevitably consider how migration feeds into other demographic trends such as birth rates ([Fihel and Solga 2014](#), 97–8).



Sociologists, by contrast, seem blinkered by a ‘methodological nationalism’, which leads them to seek the causes of phenomena only within society conceived as existing within the borders of the nation-state (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003). This is well illustrated in the case of Poland, with its abundance of both mainstream sociological and migration research, but limited overlap between disciplines. Sociologists study people living in Poland, usually not even taking into account whether individual respondents within their samples have any migration experience. Migration scholars naturally study migrants and return migrants.

The dangers of failing to consider migration factors are illustrated by the story of Ireland’s ‘devotional revolution’ in the nineteenth century. The causes of this blossoming of religiosity have long remained a mystery – hard to explain with reference to trends in Ireland itself. However, Roddy (2017) has recently argued that the cause was exposure to religious literature produced in the United States. In other words, social historians had been looking in the wrong place for the explanation, seeking causes in Ireland, and failing to notice that the influences were coming from Irish migrants abroad. Already in the late nineteenth century, Irish people in Ireland were located in a transnational social space, and this is the space in which social trends were being formed.

We argue, therefore, that migration scholars can use knowledge of trends already identified by mainstream social science to look for what is changing as a result of migration. In turn, migration researchers can help non-migration scholars to decipher the social trends which their methodological nationalism is impeding them from fully understanding. We also argue for combining sending and receiving society scholarship. Our book shows how this can be achieved.

Analysts of receiving countries – at least since the transnational turn in the 1990s – are less blinkered by methodological nationalism. Receiving-society migration researchers could themselves benefit from more ‘talking across disciplines’ (Brettell and Hollifield 2008), and migration scholars and mainstream sociologists do not usually team up to write wide-ranging studies of impact on a single receiving country.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, within narrower remits they adopt an inside-out approach. They are also preoccupied with stayers – citizens of the countries affected by immigration. Their research provides pointers for how to study impact on sending societies. The first pointer is simply to indicate the significance of migration. If we ask how a country is affected socially by international migration, and then think of the United Kingdom or almost any other western European country, we can readily see that the existence of immigration is an election-swinging issue, generating lively debate about the

cultural impact of migration, as society becomes more diverse. Scholars are particularly interested in how contacts between citizens and newcomers affect developments in race relations, ‘cosmopolitan’ attitudes and social cohesion. This combines with recognition that migrants’ lives often straddle two or more societies, involving everyday communication with, and frequent return to, their countries of origin. Ethnically diverse locations in receiving societies form part of a transnational social space. The receiving country literature asks how neighbourhoods change when more local people have contact with difference, while simultaneously being affected by media and political interpretations of cultural change. Identical questions can be asked about the other ‘end’ of the transnational fields: the societies sending migrants into diverse neighbourhoods abroad, migrants who then return to countries like Poland for visits or to resettle.

Very recently indeed, scholars developing Levitt’s (1998) concept of social remittances have begun to study how attitudes towards diversity travel back and forth between sending and receiving countries, and the impact of this on sending-country stayers. Our book builds on the work of Nedelcu (2012, writing about Romanians in Toronto) and a number of Polish colleagues (notably Garapich 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, and Gawlewicz 2015a, 2015b), as well as on our own research. Chapter 4 puts social remittances under the microscope. It scrutinises the concept, identifies how it can be used more precisely and suggests aspects that deserve greater attention than they usually receive. In particular, we emphasise the need to examine more closely how remittances ‘circulate’, travelling from sending to receiving countries, as well as vice versa.

We do not view social trends as unidirectional, since levels of religiosity, tolerance, democracy, prosperity and so forth in a particular country can rise, fall and rise again over time. All such phenomena are of course complex and can be variously defined. In order to understand the broader trends, it is helpful to consider the conclusions of anthropological and sociological non-migration literature on CEE. Though highlighting differences between countries, scholars also describe many twenty-first-century social phenomena and trends which are equally relevant in Poland. These include the growing strength of social movements and a somewhat uneven trend towards more equality for women and minorities, somewhat more trust and respect for the rule of law, but also the continuation of informal practices, pockets of nostalgia for ‘socialism’ and widespread scepticism and resistance towards top-down narratives.

Despite competing and complex tendencies, we do, however, see two clear-cut trends in CEE since 1989. One is that societies are now much

more like societies in western Europe, although it is better to view this as being about coexistence within a common transnational space rather than as a process of the East ‘catching up’ with the West, or as the distorted modernisation (Bafoil 2009) of the communist period being replaced by ‘real’ modernisation. The other, connected, development is that the post-1989 opening of borders let the genie out of the bottle. Even Poland, which had much more open borders than most of its neighbours, was a country where in 1990 most of the population had never been abroad. Travel and work abroad are eye-opening experiences, bringing recognition that there is more than one way to do things (although this does not always result in acceptance that alternative cultures and viewpoints are equally valid: see the discussion of ‘shallow’ and ‘deep’ cosmopolitanism in chapter 8). One of our interviewees, a barman in Wrocław, expressed this idea in simple terms: ‘Poland is a more open country since communism ended. Some Poles began going abroad and saw how people lived . . . and Poles who came back to Poland passed that on. That’s probably how change takes place here.’ The granddaughter’s appearance in the Allegro advertisement was a revealing moment. The little girl and her mother’s skin colour was perhaps dictated by technical reasons – to imply that they needed to be spoken to in English. Nonetheless, the implied normality of mixed marriages abroad, in this true-to-life advertisement, is highly significant in white, mono-ethnic Poland.

Overall, migration often contributes to social trends by virtue of a levelling effect which enables certain categories of the population to become part of that trend. For instance, the proportion of people in Poland who have been abroad has risen sharply since 1989, from under half to more than three-quarters. Retired people, who often lack the resources to travel on holiday, disproportionately travel to visit family and friends (Boguszewski 2016). In other words, this gives them an opportunity which they would not otherwise enjoy, as well as providing more exposure to difference for a social group which often shows up in Polish survey data as being more closed and intolerant. If more Poles speak English, this is mostly because almost all young people now have the opportunity to learn it at school. However, some grandparents (who all studied Russian at school) also learn it because they visit abroad, so they too become contributors to the trend of increasing competence in English. If more women are learning to drive, this is partly because wealthier families living in cities and suburbs can afford to have two cars. However, if poorer women in small towns also learn to drive – since their husbands are away working abroad – then this gives this relatively underprivileged category the opportunity to participate in ‘motor-parity’. As this example also shows, not all

migration effects are intended, and in fact women's increased equality in particular often seems to be an unintended result of migration.

We use the word 'migration'<sup>2</sup> rather than 'mobility' in the book's title. This is largely because the book is situated within scholarship on the impact of 'migration'. However, the subtitle mentions 'mobility', the word preferred by EU institutions and by many scholars of transnationalism. Our book frequently returns to the matter of how EU free movement of people makes impacts on the origin country different from those of more traditional migration. On the centenary of Thomas and Znaniecki's classic *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* it is appropriate to ask: what is different about migration impact today?

The EU mobility experiment, together with the unique historical phenomenon of the post-communist system transformation and the long shadow that it casts over twenty-first-century CEE, create a doubly interesting laboratory in which to develop new methods for understanding migration impact. Poland, as one of the most significant sending countries, the democratisation trailblazer and the possessor of the richest sociological tradition in the region, is a perfect case study. Of course, only 14 years have elapsed since Poland's EU accession, and it would be better to study the phenomenon with the benefit of some historical hindsight. It may be that some of the impacts we describe prove to be ephemeral. Nonetheless, we hope that our study will provide clues for future researchers who wish to apply our methodology as a tool to understand migration impact in other EU countries, or explore still further aspects of migration-related change in Poland.

The book is structured as follows. [Chapter 2](#) is an overview chapter which provides background on Polish social change and migration trends necessary to understand the rest of the book; summarises the findings of all the chapters; and ties together threads, discussing the specific migration impact of EU citizens' twenty-first-century mobility. It is written in layperson's language and, if read with [chapter 1](#), will give a good idea of our evidence and arguments. The interested reader is invited to read further into the book for more detailed and extensively referenced content.

[Chapter 3](#), by Anne White and Izabela Grabowska, discusses existing research on the impact of migration on sending countries, especially in CEE; refines further the concept of social remittances; and explains how an inside-out approach can reveal the mechanisms of how migration relates to social trends. [Chapter 4](#), by Izabela Grabowska, shows how social remittances work in practice. Grabowska argues that workplaces are particularly important sites for diffusing social remittances; that in one significant respect, acquisition of skills and competences abroad, it is possible

to find data on the extent to which Polish society is changing thanks to migration; and that qualitative research in specific locations in Poland can illuminate the features of those individual return migrants who make a difference.

[Chapter 5](#), by Paweł Kaczmarczyk, investigates labour market impacts of post-2004 migration from Poland. He argues that migration effects – to a large extent unexpectedly – are small or negligible in the short and medium term, on the national level. This is mostly due to structural conditions dating back to the early 1990s and, in particular, to a persistent oversupply of labour, which mitigates the effects of migration from Poland. However, the long-term impacts of contemporary Polish mobility might be substantial for the geographical distribution of the Polish population, as many working-age people from areas with limited job opportunities settle abroad. This raises questions about the transnational family ties which will continue to bind extended families across national borders.

[Chapter 6](#), by Krystyna Slany, considers such family relations, showing how the continuing high value placed on family life by Poles in Poland is not undermined by Poles living abroad and how, in fact, transnational families maintain a strong sense of solidarity; how slow progress towards more sharing of roles within households in Poland is mirrored, and to a limited extent anticipated, among families abroad, especially in countries with strong gender equality programmes, such as Norway; and how female circular migrants add to the share of independently minded and self-confident women in conservative rural areas.

[Chapters 7 and 8](#), by Anne White, consider how different aspects of livelihoods, lifestyles, culture and identity are changing in Poland and how migration contributes to such changes in different localities. She argues that migration-wrought change may happen more often in cities, where it meets less resistance, but that when it happens in small towns and among less well-educated sections of society, where other influences for change are fewer, it has more ‘value-added’. In [chapter 9](#) White puts forward the concept of ‘Polish society abroad’ and argues that social change among Poles abroad is an intrinsic part of social change in Poland. [Chapter 10](#) considers the impact of immigration on Poland. This was originally conceived as a short chapter on immigration as a prospect, but while White was writing this chapter, migration from Ukraine massively accelerated, and Poland suddenly became a ‘country of immigration’. [Chapter 11](#) briefly reviews how we used the inside-out approach to create a more ‘transnational’ method for understanding social change in Poland. It

makes suggestions for applying the approach to other countries. The book concludes with a bibliography shared by all chapters.

## Notes

- 1 Exceptions include Fanning and Munck (2011), an edited volume considering a broad range of immigration impacts on Ireland.
- 2 Unless otherwise indicated, 'migration' refers to international migration. However, we do in places consider international migration side by side with internal migration.

## 2

# The impact of migration from and to Poland since EU accession

ANNE WHITE, IZABELA GRABOWSKA, PAWEŁ KACZMARCZYK  
AND KRYSTYNA SLANY

## 1. Introduction

Chapters 1 and 2, taken together, offer a short version of our book for the general reader. Alternatively, they serve as an extended introduction for readers who wish also to read the remaining chapters. The first part of chapter 2 discusses how we understand ‘social change’ and provides background on social change in Poland, Polish migration and its impacts. The second part summarises the main content of the rest of the book. However, it is not just dry conclusions, and is plentifully illustrated with supporting evidence. It also includes a section on poverty and remittances, a topic that is not covered later in the book. Finally, we comment on how our approach could be applied to any country, particularly other EU member states. We have tried not to clutter the chapter with too many citations. Where arguments from the main part of the book are summarised, the reader will find fuller referencing in the later chapters. Chapters 4, 6 and 7 contain detail on the methodology of the various research projects on which this book is partly based.

## 2. Social change

This book is about society in change: we are interested in change as an ongoing process, continuous but also unpredictable (Sztompka 2000, 17). We have tried to use data that is as up-to-date as possible. However, recent developments in Poland have taken everyone by surprise. Thanks to the

arrival of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, Poland has suddenly experienced mass immigration; the United Kingdom's vote to leave the EU has left Poles in Britain in limbo; and the post-2015 Polish government's 'Good Change' policy has had some striking effects, particularly with regard to enhancing income equality and hardening attitudes towards refugees.

Surveys in Poland provide information about change among the permanently settled population, but also about former migrants who have returned from living abroad. Returnees cannot usually be singled out in the data, but if they change as a result of migration, they alter the overall composition of society. Social change partly takes place precisely because of returnees' presence in their society of origin. Polish society within Poland can be imagined as a patchwork: each migrant who returns is another piece sewn on. However, returnees also represent potential for additional, future change, change that is not easily captured in survey evidence. For example, many returnees have acquired skills abroad, or have ideas for businesses, that cannot at present be realised in their home location in Poland.

By the same token, if Polish society is imagined as existing only within the state borders of Poland, each time a Pole moves abroad this is a loss to society – also a kind of social change. With regard to demographic trends, this is particularly obvious. For example, migration usually decreases the economically active population of childbearing age. However, people today rarely 'disappear' from Polish society when they move abroad, and in most cases they remain closely connected with Poland. Poles abroad are therefore part of social change; it is artificial to separate Polish society at home and in foreign countries. [Chapter 9](#) presents arguments for considering the existence of 'Polish society abroad' in countries such as the United Kingdom, where there is a large and diverse Polish population closely tied to Poland. The changes that Polish migrants experience abroad are to varying extents interconnected with change inside Poland. There exists what migration scholars would label a single transnational social space – society that transcends international borders.

In this book, we use the term 'social' change broadly, to encompass also economic change, and we discuss change at various levels, as for example set out by Portes (2010, 1544):

As a *cause* of change, migration has been analysed from a cultural perspective that emphasises its potential for value/normative transformation, and from a structural perspective that highlights its



demographic and economic significance. . . . Effects may simply scratch the surface of society, affecting some economic organisations, role expectations, or norms. On the other hand, they may go deep into the culture, transforming the value system, or into the social structure, transforming the distribution of power.

Since deep change, for example in religiosity or gender equality, tends to result from an accumulation of small superficial changes, our discussion includes some apparently quite trivial everyday practices. By understanding how returnees actively diffuse new practices, or fail to do so (see especially [chapter 4](#)), we can understand some mechanisms of social change, including how change can be stalled or even reversed. However, we also discovered many indirect impacts as, for example, when a university lecturer in Lublin<sup>1</sup> complained, ‘You can forget students preparing their dissertations during the summer vacation – they’re working abroad instead.’

Our view of social change is of an all-encompassing phenomenon, not just positive change, although the term is sometimes used in the sense of successful outcomes of campaigning social movements or revolutions. We do not theorise social change in this book, and the book is not intended as a contribution to social theory. Nor are we adhering to any one school of sociological thought. We are interested in how ordinary Poles understand change they see around them; modest about claiming we have discovered ‘facts’ rather than interpretations; conscious of the limitations of both quantitative and qualitative methods; and aware that our own preconceptions will have affected how we conducted our research. We try to think outside the box. Most importantly, we avoid methodological nationalism, instead seeing social change as the product of interaction between people who happen to be located in different countries.

### 3. Patterns of change and continuity in Poland

#### 3.1 Social trends, 1989–2017

In 1989, Lech Wałęsa asserted, ‘We know very well which political and economic models in Europe and in the world have passed the test of time, and it is to these models that we must turn’ ([Brown 1991](#), 56). To some extent the story of social change in Poland is a consequence of that decision, as Poland set off down the path of neo-liberal economic reforms and democratisation, also experiencing many associated processes of social change similar to those occurring in the West. Jacobsson comments (2015,

10) that ‘the radical transformations of [CEE] societies – socio-economically, politically and in terms of urban development – gives rise to some distinctive features – if not so much in the direction of change as in its pace and scale.’ For example, the share of the population attending university has increased since the 1980s everywhere in Europe, but especially in CEE. In 2002, 14 per cent of 30–34-year-olds in Poland had completed tertiary education; by 2016, the figure was 45 per cent. Corresponding figures for the United Kingdom were 31 per cent and 48 per cent (Eurostat 2017). Between 1989 and 2013, private car ownership rose from 125 to 500 per 1000 population (Dmochowska 2014, 74). Poland acquired a more recognisable middle class than could exist in the communist era, although Domański argues that even if numbers self-identifying as middle class grew in Poland (from 41 per cent to 48 per cent between 1992 and 2002),<sup>2</sup> barriers to upward social mobility remained fairly constant from the early 1980s (2015, 226, 244).

The legacy of the command economy presented obstacles that could not quickly be overcome. Even though Poland recovered as early as 1996 from the recession following the introduction of a market economy, much hardship was still to follow. Income inequality, poverty and unemployment all peaked later, at around 2004. Deindustrialisation, as elsewhere in CEE, was a painful process, especially afflicting localities heavily dependent on a single factory or industry. Unlike its neighbours, communist-era Poland had a large private agricultural sector; in 2013, more than half of farms were still less than five hectares in size (Dmochowska 2014, 66). The dysfunctionality of the communist economy had facilitated the emergence of a sizeable informal sector and promoted habits of resourcefulness and self-reliance among ordinary Poles. As in other CEE countries, in the 1990s and in some areas up to 2004, many people were thrown back on informal livelihood strategies and reliance on personal networks. In the twenty-first century, the need for these has partly disappeared. The period since 2004 has witnessed remarkable drops in unemployment (though it is still a significant problem in some locations), a decline in levels of relative and absolute poverty, and rising prosperity in the Polish countryside, particularly in the vicinity of cities.

A factor specific to Poland was the prestige of the Catholic Church, which, under Pope John Paul II, had been strongly identified with opposition to the communist regime. Catholic bishops used their political influence to secure the passage in 1993 of one of the most restrictive abortion laws in Europe and have continued to promote conservative views of gender roles. This was despite widespread opposition in 1993, and, over subsequent decades, increasing popular support for gender equality, with

**Table 2.1** Assessment of changes in Poland, 1989–2014 (selected changes)

	Percentage believing in change for better/more	Percentage believing in change for worse/less
State of the Polish economy	53	28
Poles' work ethic	50	19
Tolerance for other people's views	47	20
Social security	32	46
Readiness to help others	30	40
Healthcare in Poland	22	62
Strength of family ties	16	54
Poles' honesty	14	47
Poles' religiosity	10	67

Source: Boguszewski (2014a, 93). A total of twenty changes were identified, but we list only the most relevant, omitting, for example, foreign policy.

some evidence of more societal tolerance towards sexual minorities. In general, as elsewhere in CEE, women and minorities benefited to some extent from anti-discrimination legislation passed in connection with EU accession and membership (Plomien 2010), although they have also had to defend these rights through social activism. Polish support for EU membership, which had been enthusiastic in the early 1990s but somewhat wavered thereafter, jumped after 2004 as the benefits of membership became obvious and in June 2017 stood at 88 per cent,<sup>3</sup> although survey evidence suggests that this support is partly conditional upon Poland not participating in EU arrangements for refugee resettlement (Anon. 2017).

Table 2.1 shows some ways in which Poles themselves considered society had changed during the first twenty-five years after 1989. However, as discussed later, people's perceptions of social change do not always match survey evidence about individuals' attitudes and behaviour.

### 3.2 Differentiated change at regional and local level

There is no 'average Pole'. Change of all kinds, including migration impacts, is sometimes not perceptible in national statistics, but more evident in certain geographical locations. Place matters partly because of differences in social composition. For example, city inhabitants are wealthier on average (see table 2.2), and the largest cities, especially the Warsaw metropolitan area and Wrocław, have a higher concentration of

**Table 2.2** Correspondence between population size and selected ascending/descending social indicators, 2013–15

Location, by population band	Feels only Polish (%) Feb. 2014 <sup>a</sup>	Does not believe in God (%) Feb. 2015 <sup>b</sup>	Both men and women clean the house, depending on who has time (%) Jan. 2013 <sup>c</sup>	Net monthly income per capita (PLN) Mar./May 2015 <sup>d</sup>
Village	62	0	27	1,157
Town under 20,000	65	2	36	1,475
20,000–99,999	54	6	43	1,534
100,000–499,999	51	4	49	1,635 (100,000–199,999)
500,000+	22	11	49	1,808 (200,000–499,999) 2,306

a) As opposed to Pole/European and European/Pole ([Grabowska and Roguska 2014](#), 274).

b) Grabowska 2015c, 151.

c) Grabowska 2013a, 109.

d) Panek and Czapieński 2015, 38.

well-educated residents (Herbst 2012, 68). For many indicators there is an association between size of population and more liberal attitudes.

Spatial inequality in Poland grew unchecked in the 1990s. In the twenty-first century, in line with EU social cohesion policy, investment programmes for underdeveloped areas have attempted to narrow the gap, but differences remain pronounced (Golinowska and Kocot 2013, 223–4). One of the main trends in the 1990s was ‘metropolitanisation’, as a handful of major cities became globally competitive (Gorzelak 2016, 202–3; Smętkowski 2013, 1529), leaving other places behind. The metropolises also cultivated identities as cosmopolitan cultural centres, encapsulated, for example, in Wrocław’s tag, ‘Wrocław the meeting place’ and status as 2016 European Capital of Culture. There has been a certain process of catching up in recent years, with some cities such as Rzeszów receiving more investment and inward migration (see chapter 7). The different sizes and wealth of different cities help shape the identities of individual regions, although in some cases – such as Warsaw and Kraków – prosperity in the regional capital can mask deprivation elsewhere (Golinowska and Kocot 2013). The East-West divide at the Vistula River also continues to be significant. Eastern Poland remains more rural and underdeveloped, receives less foreign investment and votes more conservatively than western Poland. However, social change in individual locations depends, of course, on unique combinations of localised trends. Kinowska (2015, 12), writing about rural women activists, observes that each Polish locality makes its own specific contribution to aggregated change in Poland, and therefore each merits separate, micro-level research. By extension, one can argue, each experiences its own migration impact.

Trends can reinforce one another, but they can also cancel each other out. Michalska (2013, 129), for example, mentions that the increased availability of higher education since 1989 promoted a rise in status for many rural women. However, the continuing trend of limited childcare in rural areas cancels out these advantages and makes it hard for women to realise more ambitious career plans, thwarting progress towards gender equality. In Podkarpacie, the most Catholic region of Poland, three-quarters of inhabitants attend church at least weekly (Panek, Czapiński and Kotowska 2015, 267). Catholic family values are deeply engrained (Pstrąg 2014). However, when asked whether it was acceptable for lone mothers in financial difficulties to temporarily leave their children to work abroad, over half of respondents in a 2008 opinion poll agreed, confirming the findings of qualitative research that pragmatism can trump other considerations about appropriate behaviour in regions where migration is a normal livelihood strategy (White 2017, 69).

## 4. Migration from and return to Poland

### 4.1 Migration from Poland

Over the last two hundred years, migration has been central to the social history of Poland, including areas lying outside today's borders. Poland has an identity as an 'emigration country', where migration is 'surrounded by myths, symbols, cultural codes and stereotyped framings' (Garapich 2014, 284). On the one hand, political exiles of the nineteenth century, post-Second World War refugees from communism, Jewish intellectuals expelled in 1968 and the highly educated two-million strong 'Solidarity' emigration of the 1980s have created a tradition of elite exile that makes it easy to understand framings of the post-2004 wave of highly educated Poles to the United Kingdom and Ireland as a tragic brain drain. On the other hand, Babiński and Praszałowicz (2016, 98) argue that 'migration has become inscribed in Polish tradition as a popular, rational and effective livelihood strategy'. Poles have worked temporarily in Germany since the early nineteenth century (Nowosielski 2012, 4). Christians and Jews from partitioned Poland constituted approximately 3.5 million of the wave of European labour migrants<sup>4</sup> to North America in the five decades before the First World War; a further two million economic migrants left Poland between the world wars. The communist regime, more ineffectual and somewhat more liberal than its neighbours in the Soviet bloc, allowed migration to continue, giving permission for Poles with US connections to go to the United States and, from the 1970s, turning a blind eye to 'tourists' travelling to western Europe to engage in illegal trade and temporary work on a remarkable scale (Stola 2010). Between 1.4 and 2.2 million illegal work trips abroad occurred in 1983–8 (Stola 2016, 94).

In the 1990s, migration of highly skilled people and migration for settlement reduced. In Warsaw, however, 'migration' consisted largely of professional people on short work-related trips (Jaźwińska, Łukowski and Okólski 1997, 51).<sup>5</sup> Young Poles also began to settle, partly for lifestyle reasons, in cities such as London (Garapich 2016c), to some extent similar to West European adventure-seeking 'Eurostars' (Favell and Recchi 2011). However, circular and temporary labour migration to Germany, Belgium, Italy and other continental European countries predominated (Kaczmarczyk 2005). Okólski (2001) coined the term 'incomplete migration' for migrants who earned a living abroad but 'lived' in Poland, where their families remained and to which they frequently returned. This term referred to all types of movement that, due to their nature (short-term,

circular and often irregular), easily escaped statistical systems developed to trace and describe settlement-type migration. In structural terms, incomplete migration stemmed from communist-era underdevelopment and under-urbanisation: many factory workers lived in small towns and villages, but commuted to work in cities on state-subsidised transport. After 1989, factories closed, and commuting became more expensive, so international migration began to seem a better livelihood strategy. Incomplete migrants typically were men with vocational education from peripheral regions in eastern Poland or Silesia (Okólski 2001, 2004; Kaczmarczyk 2005).

Poland's EU accession opened doors to better work, at lower personal cost, and to combining work and travel for adventure. The labour market was buoyant in countries such as the United Kingdom and Ireland, wages were higher than in Poland, and there was a wave of popular enthusiasm to experience a short spell of life abroad. Around EU accession, many migrants were young people with open-ended plans who set off with their friends and siblings. That 'nearly one in ten people in their late twenties left Poland [from May 2004 to January 2007] is probably the most conspicuous fact' (Anacka and Okólski 2010, 155). The following two quotations, from 2016 and 2011, give a flavour of the period. In the first, Rafał had gone from the eastern city of Lublin to the United Kingdom in 2002:

When I first went . . . a lot of graduates who didn't have a job here in Poland were considering whether to go abroad, everyone was thinking about it. What was the point of staying in Poland without a job, it would be better to go abroad. And because I was in England, I always helped someone get work, well, I was there, so it was easier to help out my friends.

Rafał's sense of not having other options was shared by many young people from less prosperous locations, including many small towns and villages.<sup>6</sup> Konrad, from Poznań – one of the metropolises – had a different perspective:<sup>7</sup>

[In 2005] I was finishing my studies, like lots of people were going to Ireland, to Great Britain, and, well I thought, I could try as well. Specially that quite a lot of my friends were in Dublin. That's why Dublin was the place to go. . . . They were like, yeah, it's quite fun, it's nice, you will see and learn lots of new things, so why not.

In 2004, when the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden opened their labour markets to new EU citizens, Britain, with its familiar culture and language, overtook Germany as the chief destination,<sup>8</sup> a lead that narrowed once other EU member states lifted restrictions over the next seven years. Poles took up the 'Europeanisation of the Polish labour market' (Stola 2016, 95) with enthusiasm. Countries such as Ireland, Norway and Iceland, with barely any Poles before EU accession, soon found that Poles were their largest ethnic minority population. In the first post-accession years, the stock of Polish migrants temporarily abroad jumped from around 786,000 (2002) to 1 million (2004) to 2.3 million (2007) – equivalent to 6.6 per cent of the Polish population (GUS 2009, 458). In the first years after accession there was an exodus even from the largest cities (Strzelecki et al. 2015, 144), and since 2004, people have been migrating abroad from all regions in Poland (Kostrzewa and Szałtys 2013, 52).<sup>9</sup> Flows from traditional sending regions partly reoriented themselves, particularly at first towards the United Kingdom and Ireland, and later to a wide range of European countries.

Solo-parent, 'incomplete' migration dropped by about 7 per cent between 2010 and 2014 (Walczak 2014, 60), as parents already abroad with their children persuaded others to follow their example (White 2017). Migrant families, especially with children at school, tended not to return to Poland, and the stream of family migration from Poland is a main reason for the rapid transformation of much open-ended and temporary migration around 2004–7 into what now appears to be migration for settlement (Janicka and Kaczmarczyk 2017; White 2017, 238–9).

The global economic crisis slightly reduced the stock of Poles living in western Europe, but numbers then recovered so that, by December 2016, an estimated 2.52 million people with permanent residence in Poland had been living abroad for over three months, 2.2 million of them in the EU. By far the most popular destinations were the United Kingdom (788,000) and Germany (687,000) (GUS 2017).<sup>10</sup>

EU migration was facilitated by new communications technology and cheap transport, which helped potential migrants inform themselves about promising destinations quickly, and contributed to a sense that it would be easy to return if the migration experiment failed (White 2017). Moreover, the emotional costs of parting were partly reduced because it had become easier to keep in touch with friends and family in Poland thanks to 'transnational practices' such as phoning, Skyping and visiting. Many migrants, feeling that they had feet in two countries, began to acquire a sense of dual belonging. Typically, Poles in Poland and abroad



know Poles in multiple foreign destinations, and their networks consist of unique combinations of ties between different places. It is rarely the case today that many people from a specific place in Poland go to a single destination abroad.<sup>11</sup>

## 4.2 Return to Poland

There was no permanent return wave after 1989. Some Polish émigrés experimented with return to Poland but often decided not to settle (Górny and Kolankiewicz 2002; Stola 2016, 93). No recent quantitative study exists of returnees to Poland,<sup>12</sup> but our qualitative research<sup>13</sup> backs up findings of scholars publishing circa 2010. Although return migration is diverse, one can draw a crude distinction between two categories of migrant. On the one hand is the large body of young people, often graduates like Rafał and Konrad, who left around 2004 even from cities, and mostly went to the United Kingdom and Ireland. They either returned to Poland, apparently permanently, or are still abroad. Another category is the many thousands of incomplete, often slightly older migrants from smaller towns and villages, who in some cases started migrating before 2004. They are more likely than highly educated migrants to return, sometimes with the intention of settling, but often to continue to engage in various kinds of ‘back-and-forth’ migration (Anacka and Fihel 2013, 69; Fihel and Grabowska-Lusińska 2014; White 2014b). For some returnees, the experience of trying to resettle in Poland persuades them that home is in the foreign country, and they engage in ‘double return’: a second return, but this time to the foreign country, for which they have begun to feel homesick (Raczyński 2015, 146; White 2014a and 2014b). Returnees are more economically active than the general population, but most surveys show that they are also more likely to be unemployed, sometimes on purpose, if periods in Poland are rests between spells of working abroad (Grabowska 2016).

Given that ‘return’ is indefinite, it is hard to count ‘returnees’. Data collected in Poland is only a snapshot; a complete record of return to Poland would need to include surveying Poles abroad as to whether they had ever been temporary return migrants. According to survey data, 12 per cent of Poles currently resident in Poland have worked abroad for an unspecified period in the last ten years, including 27 per cent of 25–34-year-olds (Cybulska 2016, 1);<sup>14</sup> another survey, in 2017, found that 22 per cent had worked abroad at some time (Kubisiak, Ganclerz and Pilichowska 2017, 20).

Like returnees to other countries, Polish migrants return home for family reasons and/or because they are homesick and/or have fulfilled

their migration plans (see, e.g. CDS 2010a, 93; Dziekońska 2012, 140; Frelak and Reguska 2008, 3; Kostrzewa and Sałtys 2013, 74). Poland's economic growth during the global economic crisis was not enough on its own to persuade Poles to return, particularly because, despite the crisis, Polish wages and welfare benefits still compared unfavourably with equivalents in most destination countries (Kaczmarczyk, Anacka and Fiheł 2016, 220). Since migrants return to be at home with their friends and family, return is often to smaller places rather than to more thriving cities. When, as often seems to happen, this is not sustainable economically, returnees are tempted to go back to foreign countries, where they already know their way round, rather than move to an unfamiliar Polish city, where they may not find affordable accommodation. Hence return migration from abroad currently has limited capacity to produce a re-location of the Polish workforce within Poland.<sup>15</sup>

How long returnees spend abroad affects what influence they can have in Poland. The longer migrants are away, the more knowledge they acquire of the receiving country, and the more they may improve their skills. On the other hand, their networks at home may weaken, although this is a very individual matter. Different researchers come to different conclusions about Polish return migrants' average length of stay abroad, ranging from under six months (Dziekońska 2012, 98; Frelak and Roguska 2008) to two years (CDS 2010a, 27; Grabowska-Lusińska 2012).

## 5. The impact of migration on Poland

### 5.1 Pre-2004 impact

This book is not about the influence of migration on Poland historically. However, it is worth highlighting some continuities. In the early twentieth century, Thomas and Znaniecki (1918–20, 1984) studied the correspondence and therefore the transnational practices of migrants and stayers – how stayers' lives in Poland intertwined with those of migrants in Chicago. This has arguably always constituted the main type of migration impact, even if today transnational communication takes different forms, and migrants can keep in touch with much wider networks of stayers. During the communist period, particularly after Stalin's death, contacts were often quite close between Poles in Poland and their relatives abroad (Sword 1996). Western material goods – comparatively rare in Poland but more available there than in other CEE countries thanks to migration and visits abroad – constituted 'a recognised barometer of social status, personal style and taste' (Burrell 2011b, 145).

When international migration became a common livelihood strategy in some Polish regions in the 1990s, the money migrants earned, as in other societies, was mostly used for consumption. While it made a difference to individual households, it had little or no traceable impact on the economy, even on a local level, except perhaps in Opole Silesia, where migration was most intense (Jończy and Rokita-Poskart 2012; Kaczmarczyk and Nestorowicz 2016, 144). A sense of loss and missing family and friends pervaded life in some locations with high volumes of migration, especially when family members worked undocumented abroad and therefore could not easily return for visits.

I've never set eyes on my mother-in-law. She went to the States before I met my husband [c.1993]. . . . She married off her two sons, but she wasn't at either wedding. It's so sad. But that's life. Thanks to her being in the States her children had their weddings. Otherwise they couldn't have afforded them. (Eliza, Grajewo, 2008, knows her mother-in-law only from telephone conversations)

One impact of migration was to breed more migration, as adult children with migrating parents often followed in their footsteps (Kaczmarczyk 2008). 'Migration cultures' emerged in local communities, both in the sense that migration was an expected and acceptable livelihood strategy, and also as ways of understanding and doing migration. One aspect of local migration cultures, for example, was a heavy reliance on networks of friends and relatives to facilitate migration (Osipowicz 2002). This was to become less essential after EU accession.

## 5.2 Migration influences after 2004

Dziegielewski's survey of Polish weeklies<sup>16</sup> coverage of EU mobility from 2004 to 2012 reveals an upbeat framing of new mobility opportunities around 2004, followed by increasing concern about social problems linked to migration, and eventual loss of interest in the topic. Clement's (2017) analysis of articles in popular daily tabloids<sup>17</sup> during 2013 suggested, however, that this section of the press had not lost interest in migration, which was often framed negatively, with Eurosceptic overtones.

Survey data from January to March 2014, before the 2015 refugee crisis and its politicisation, showed that ordinary Poles were more positive than negative about the impacts of EU-facilitated migration. When asked to express in their own words the pros and cons of EU membership, only 1 per cent identified labour migration and its consequences as a

**Table 2.3** The ‘main benefits of EU membership for Poland’  
(answers related to migration benefits only, as percentages)

Open borders, free movement, the Schengen Agreement, visa-free travel	31
Freedom to work within the EU, freedom for business, lower unemployment in Poland	17
Opening up to the world, integration with the world, no cultural barriers, mutual understanding, erosion of stereotypes, feeling of community [with Europe]	3
Freedom to study abroad	2
Benefits, opportunities for young people	2

Source: Roguska 2014, 188–93.

disadvantage, and only 1 per cent expressed concern about immigration, Islamism and Roma (lumped together as a single answer). The most often mentioned benefits were open borders and freedom of movement (named by 31 per cent of respondents). See [table 2.3](#).

Golinowska and Kocot, in their book about regional development (2013), see migration as a pernicious influence that removes young and educated people from Poland. While acknowledging that circular migration and brain gain – where migrants acquire new skills and knowledge abroad – are potentially positive outcomes of migration, they argue that these are not very evident in Poland. In their profiles of individual regions, they therefore treat net out-migration as symptomatic of underdevelopment. The best outcome, from their perspective, would be more adequate investment outside the flourishing metropolises – in line with EU cohesion policy – which would enable Poles to stay in Poland and make better use of the human and natural resources in regions currently seen as lagging.

Other analysts, influenced by international discourses of ‘harnessing the diaspora’ (see [chapter 3](#)) are more optimistic about potential benefits of ties created by migration, and suggest the need both to involve Polonia organisations in a greater range of economic – as opposed to cultural – links with Poland and to encourage entrepreneurship among returnees ([Anon. 2015](#)). Since 2003, Polish governments have attempted to find ways to support return migration, chiefly by providing information for potential returnees. Originally they hoped that Poland could emulate Ireland (before its 2008 crisis), and used Poland’s GDP growth as an incentive to attract back migrants ([Lesińska 2010](#)). However, of course this depended on economic growth occurring not nationally, but also in the home locations to which migrants actually wanted to return. It seems that

most regional governments believe that to some extent migration can facilitate development. Heffner and Solga (2013, 224) report that only three regional governments did not regard migration as offering any potential benefit: Lubuskie (on the German border), Wielkopolska (centred on Poznań) and Mazowieckie (centred on Warsaw).

Our book complements the edited volume whose title can be translated *A Decade of Polish Membership of the EU: Social Consequences of Post-2004 Polish Migration* (Lesińska et al. 2014), which sums up the state of knowledge about migration's impact on Poland. *Decade* arose from a report aimed at policymakers (Slany and Solga 2014) and presents contributions by leading Polish migration scholars, including Grabowska, Kaczmarczyk and Slany. Impressively detailed, it illustrates how impact is intertwined with other aspects of migration – migration motives, experiences of life abroad, and the labour market trajectories of individual returnees. It recognises that the consequences of migration are regionally differentiated. *Decade* is typical of migration impact scholarship in referring quite often to costs and benefits, although it is far from presenting a simple cost-benefit analysis, and in according high priority to demographic and economic impacts. It treats a rather narrow range of social impacts, focusing mostly on those relating to the economy (labour market outcomes and skills), as well as on families (in itself a large and multifaceted topic).

A comparison of the content of *Decade* with the list of Polish social trends outlined earlier in this chapter suggests that many trends are not covered in migration research. Considering the scale of migration from Poland, one might suppose that all kinds of social change are somehow influenced. It would be interesting to know what influence migration has, for example, on religion, trust or tolerance. Public figures and the media are not shy about ascribing migration impact in these areas – for example, suggesting that migration contributes to an ongoing corrosion of moral values in Polish society by exposing Poles to Western consumerism, by focusing their thoughts on material success and by separating family members. Such arguments, however simplistic and often not evidence-based they might be, are powerful partly because they adopt a holistic, inside-out approach. Supposedly, Polish society is going in the wrong direction, and migration contributes to this by promoting consumerism and so forth.

An inside-out approach has the merit of making impact easy to grasp within the overall context of Poland's (imagined) trajectory. There is no reason for scholars to avoid this approach as long as they can find evidence and convincing arguments. This is why, in our book, we turn inside out

the analysis in *Decade* (chapter 5 by Kaczmarczyk and chapter 6 by Slany) and also present a wider array of impacts (chapter 4 by Grabowska, chapter 6 by Slany and chapters 7 and 8 by White). Before presenting our findings, however, it is important to discuss how mainstream sociologists do or do not themselves factor migration into their explanations for changing Polish society. If migration scholars are not, in general, writing about such matters – apart from mentioning them in passing – one would hope that mainstream sociologists could fill the gap.

## 6. Mainstream sociologists and migration

Migration scholars naturally focus on specific migration influences, whereas sociologists often examine a wider set of causes of analysed phenomena. Unfortunately, as in the case of the Irish Devotional Revolution mentioned in chapter 1, they tend not to look outside the national borders of the society they know. Hence migration passes unnoticed in many monographs and articles. In addition to methodological nationalism, one can speculate that in the Polish case another reason for such neglect may be that sociologists, who typically work in cities, are not always conscious of the significance of migration for smaller locations. Since migration statistics based on official deregistration from place of residence seriously understate the actual number of migrants, sociologists who rely on these have an additional reason to underestimate migration's role.

Establishing migration influence is complicated by the fact that regular Polish opinion polls do not ask respondents to state whether they have migration experience, alongside their other socio-demographic features such as age and sex. For example, Feliksiak (2013), discussing why increasing numbers of Poles express accepting attitudes towards LGBT people, finds a correlation between personally knowing gays and lesbians and being tolerant. Having established that this is not merely a correlation, but a causal connection well known to researchers investigating attitudes to homosexuality, he points out that small-town residents are particularly tolerant, and speculates that this might be because it is easier to come out in a small town. Not only does this seem counter-intuitive, but it misses the more obvious explanation that because of their high incidence of migration, small towns are full of people who have met gays and lesbians while they were working abroad.

Generally, only larger polls, notably Social Diagnosis and the one-off survey Living Conditions in Polish Society (Zagórski 2008a), identify return migrants. However, apart from Kaczmarczyk (2014) (a migration

scholar and economist), scholars rarely seem to make use of such return migrant data. The POLPAN longitudinal survey offers an opportunity to track return migrants. Tomescu-Dubrow (2016) uses this material to find out whether migration leads to greater wealth, over the long term, and finds that respondents who appeared to have spent at least two months living and/or working abroad at some point in their lives, had on average higher incomes, and were more likely to become employers (of at least four non-family members) than respondents who appeared to have no foreign experience.

Scholars writing about entire countries are less likely than those with local or regional focus to incorporate migration into their analysis. Halamska's (2012) monograph on changing rural Poland, for example, mentions international migration only in passing, while the CBOS study *The Polish Village* (Hipsz 2014b) does not refer to it. By contrast, Komorska (2015, 97), discussing the marginalisation of young people in the Lublin region, notes that migration is a significant facilitator of upward social mobility. Kubicki (2015, 103) offers examples of Podcarpathian villagers who bring back more tolerant attitudes to diversity as a result of living abroad. Łukowski, Bojar and Jałowiecki, in their study of Gołdap (2009), a Polish-Russian border crossing, note that post-accession migration opportunities have reduced dependence on survival strategies such as smuggling.

Anthropologists, who live among their research participants, are particularly well-placed to notice migration. Marysia Galbraith's 2014 monograph, based on research since 1992 in Lesko (Podkarpacie) and Kraków, shows how different factors come together to cause her participants to self-identify as European; she includes a whole chapter on migration. In *Hunters, Gatherers, and Practitioners of Powerlessness*, a study of early twenty-first-century survival strategies such as bootleg mining in three post-industrial and post-state farming locations, Rakowski observes that such strategies became redundant after 2004. Rakowski is in no doubt that EU accession created a lifeline for very poor people, reducing 'the scope of poverty, as the unemployed were finding whatever work was available in the European Union, and then leaving at once' (2016, xiv).

Social movements is another research area in which migration influences could more often be taken into account. The mushrooming of urban grassroots movements is a noteworthy development in twenty-first-century CEE (Jacobsson 2015). In Poland these movements have included, for example, an active tenants' movement to defend the rights of people in low-quality housing. Polańska (2015, 212–3) provides a set of explanations

which, unusually, include the influence of people who have already migrated from Polish cities:

The specificity of the Polish case, that added fuel to the contentious action of tenants, was, among others, the legal disorder that prevailed in the country, affecting housing issues, along with the growing number of 'housing-entrepreneurs' using the inconsistencies of the legal system, and the large number of young people emigrating abroad, after the accession to EU, activating the desire for better living conditions among those left behind.

One reason why 'migration' might escape notice in the urban context is that it is commonly associated by non-specialists with labour migration. If one adds in educational migration, internships and various kinds of professional work trips abroad, then it becomes clearer that cities are indeed full of people with experience of life abroad, who often move back and forth within a 'transnational action space' (Binnie and Klesse 2013). Chromiec (2011, 207) observes that NGOs promoting intercultural dialogue in Poland are usually staffed by people who have spent time abroad or are themselves migrants. Demonstrations in support of refugee or LGBT rights in Poland regularly involve Polish return migrants alongside stayers, while other Polish activists in the same causes take part in parallel events abroad. Polish LGBT activists such as Robert Biedroń, Poland's first gay mayor, gained inspiration from periods of living and working in other EU countries (Binnie and Klesse 2013). Following O'Dwyer, Binnie and Klesse make the further point (2013, 1111) that even if the EU's direct influence in promoting LGBT rights is rather weak, much more important is the creation of a transnational mobility space where activists circulate between countries.

## 7. An inside-out analysis of the impact of migration

The impact of migration on Poland occurs mostly through links that migration creates between individual Poles and foreign countries. A contrasting view of Poland as an isolated entity, suffering mostly loss as a result of mass emigration, does not reflect the lived reality of Polish people today. Large numbers of Poles resident in Poland have at one time lived abroad. Their past experiences and continuing social networks abroad help shape their lives after return from foreign countries. Moreover, the majority of Polish people, those 'stayers' who have never lived abroad, have



contacts with Polish migrants. When these migrants are close relatives, both the stayers and the migrants find their thoughts constantly straying across nation-state borders. Iwona, for example, interviewed by White in 2016, had close family and friends in Italy. When asked what new habits her family in Lublin had adopted thanks to frequent visits to Italy, she said, ‘How we remind each other “But in Italy! It was like that! Do you remember?”’ Wanda, a pensioner interviewed after her English-language class in Wrocław, described how she and her daughter, living near London, swapped packets of flower seeds, a botanical exchange that to Wanda symbolised the intertwining of Polish and English culture in their two lives. Family members of circular migrants in particular can find that they participate vicariously in the ‘half-and-half’ lives of their family members. When the latter spend time resting in Poland they seem to continue to half-live in the country where they work, frequently talking about the foreign country and drawing comparisons.

The story of migration’s impact on Poland should also include Poles abroad, even those who feel fairly settled. They often maintain close ties to Poland, so should be considered part of Polish society. Many other Poles come and go, changing their main country of residence more than once. Nowadays, it is impossible to draw a distinct line between Poles in Poland and a Polish ‘diaspora’ or ‘community’ abroad (known to Poles as ‘Polonia’). We prefer the term ‘Polish society abroad’. This concept indicates the existence of strong social relations among Poles, irrespective of the country in which they happen to be based. Rather than viewing migrants as members of no society at all, as is commonly assumed, it makes better sense to see certain migrants as simultaneously members of two societies. This is particularly true of mobile EU citizens, who have congregated in large numbers and represent a kind of microcosm of Poland in other member states – for example, Poles in the United Kingdom.

Social change in Poland is therefore connected to social change abroad. Of course, every migrant has their unique set of ties to Poland and feels connected to varying extents in different times and places. Sometimes, the connection is hardly perceptible. In other cases, Poles deliberately try to achieve social change through activism across borders. Change probably occurs more often not through activism but as a process of mutual cultural influence. Sometimes this is unconscious, sometimes deliberate, when migrants and stayers try to persuade one another to change their habits, values or beliefs about diverse matters, from eating habits to racism. As discussed in [chapters 3 and 4](#), these are ‘social remittances’, which travel back and forth between the two societies, Polish

society abroad and Polish society in Poland. They often reinforce wider (particularly US) cultural influences.

In short, everyone in Poland is touched to some extent by migration and lives within the transnational social space. However, migration influences some stayers more than others. Obviously, close family members are the most emotionally affected. However, in other respects the impact of migration is greatest in the lives and livelihoods of certain parts of society, especially Poles who are poorer financially, or less well-educated, or retired or resident in small towns and villages, or a combination of two or more of these. Social change in Poland is generally most observable in big cities and among more educated and younger Poles, partly because these sections of the population have the most exposure to a range of outside influences. Migration is not so important for them, since their lives are changing already for other reasons. It is more important for people who are less exposed to other influences.

Migration influences society by reinforcing or, in some cases, counteracting trends that are already occurring for other reasons. An example of counteraction would be its damaging effect on levels of belief that ‘most people can be trusted’. In common with other CEE countries, Poland, as it becomes more prosperous, is also more trusting than in the 1990s. However, this is an uneven process, and young people exhibit high levels of mistrust. A discourse of hostility among economic migrants about other Poles, who supposedly let one another down and ‘act like wolves towards one another’, amplifies a mistrust of strangers that is already considerable in poorer parts of Poland that have high volumes of international migration.

Migration’s role in bolstering trends is apparent with regard to the drops in unemployment and poverty mentioned earlier in this chapter, but this is most marked at a subnational level. Registered unemployment in Poland declined from around 20 per cent in 2004 to around 6 per cent in 2008, and has remained low, while employment growth has been almost steady. The labour market, formerly characterised by a permanent over-supply of labour, is now marked by growing competition for workers (Roszkowska et al. 2017). Wages, both nominal and real, have risen considerably (see figure 5.1). Chapter 5 discusses the extent to which those developments are attributable to migration. On a national level, Kaczmarczyk concludes that the influence of migration is small but generally positive. On a subnational level, however, migration can have more visible impact. In particular, the impressive level of job creation since 2004, which is linked to Poland’s healthy annual GDP growth (averaging 3.6 per cent, 2004–16) has not occurred everywhere, particularly in rural regions,

which are characterised by small family farms and limited economic development. In such places, migration plays a clear role in driving down unemployment.

Although different ways of measuring poverty produce different figures, and the extent of poverty reduction can be disputed, Eurostat data suggest that the percentage of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion more than halved, from 45.3 per cent in 2005 to 21.9 per cent in 2016.<sup>18</sup> Reasons include falling unemployment, rising wages and – very recently – more generous welfare provision. Money sent home by migrants as ‘economic remittances’ also plays a part.

According to World Bank data ([World Bank 2016](#)), the value of remittances increased from around 2.28 billion USD in 2003 to over 10 billion in 2007 and around 6.8 billion in 2015 (i.e. from less than 1 per cent to 1.3 per cent of GDP). Barbone, Piętnka-Kosińska and Topińska (2012, 3) estimate that in 2008 remittances decreased the poverty rate by about 2 percentage points overall, although remittances varied considerably from region to region. In 2008, 1 per cent of households in Mazowieckie received remittances, compared with highs of 6 per cent, 4 per cent and 4 per cent in Opole, Pomerania and Podkarpacie respectively. They made a substantial difference to households who received them, where they constituted an average of 62 per cent of income. Barbone, Piętnka-Kosińska and Topińska also note a corresponding slight decrease in income disparities in Poland thanks to remittances.

Migrants’ ability to send remittances, and the capacity of remittances to reduce poverty, depend, however, on many factors, including the migrants’ positions in the receiving country labour markets, their migration strategies and whether they return to settle in Poland. For instance, if they are working in poorly paid jobs abroad, migrants may not be able to save enough to remit; on the other hand, migrants with better jobs may wish to settle in the destination location and invest in the receiving country rather than send money back home. As in other countries, studies on remittances sent home by Polish migrants document that most remitters use the money to cover costs of everyday consumption (around 60 per cent of all respondents), to improve their housing conditions (30 per cent, renovation and purchase combined), to pay debts (15 per cent), to invest in children’s education (10 per cent) or simply to increase their savings (20 per cent). These patterns differ, however, not only between Polish regions but also according to the migrants’ countries of residence ([Chmielewska 2015](#)). Even if, in aggregate terms, the scale of remittances to Poland is not very high, it is commonly assessed as having significant and positive impacts on the Polish economy.

Qualitative research tends to support this conclusion, as illustrated above in the references to the strategies of ex-bootleg miners (Rakowski 2016) and former smugglers (Łukowski, Bojar and Jałowicki 2009). Heads of leading institutions interviewed across 64 locations in Poland in 2007 agreed that ‘the material situation was improving as a consequence of economic growth, income from abroad and agricultural subsidies’ (Gorzelak 2008b, 20). White (2016b) finds that poor, long-term unemployed people in Limanowa and Grajewo were migrating abroad, but not always very successfully. However, sociologists of poverty do not always identify migration as a livelihood strategy for the poorest people, and this may be quite place specific. Warszywoda-Kruszyńska and Jankowski, writing about enclaves of poverty in the city of Łódź, do not discuss migration, but they do argue that poor people are becoming dependent on shadow banks and constitute a precariat doomed to perpetual social exclusion unless the government intervenes (2013, 109–10).

Travel abroad is increasing among all sections of the Polish population; this includes retired people, even if they travel less than younger age groups. In 2009 only 7 per cent of Polish pensioners, when asked how they spent their free time, said they travelled outside Poland. By 2016 the figure had risen to 22 per cent (Kolbowska 2009, 11; Omyła-Rudzka 2016a, 5). To some extent, this testifies to the increased prosperity of a section of the Polish population, who can afford to enjoy their leisure time in new ways. However, it also links to migration. Survey respondents aged over 55 are more likely than other age groups to mention visits to family and friends as reasons to travel abroad (Boguszewski 2016, 10).

For many older Poles, this is a significant new opportunity. For example, in Wrocław, Ewa commented, ‘We can get to see the world, learn English at first hand. . . . Otherwise I never would. Because we’re not from such a rich family and aren’t so well-off we could afford to go as tourists.’ Of course, this is not just a phenomenon among older people; there are Poles of all ages who would not be able to afford a foreign holiday but who now visit migrants abroad. For example, Malwina, a housewife, married to a manual worker, described in 2009 inviting a string of visitors from her small town near Ukraine to Bristol:

My sister and her husband have been twice, our friends have been, and now we have Mum. And we invite everybody who wants to come, let them come and see! They haven’t been abroad before, they didn’t have the opportunity, and now they have the chance to come and look. . . . They come just for a week or two. To see things, to go shopping.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, more Poles have been acquiring higher education thanks to its greater availability since 1989. Poles are also becoming more educated and skilled in other ways. In particular, knowledge of some foreign languages has spread. So too have transferable 'soft' skills – though not to an extent commensurate with the needs of Polish employers.

In 1996, only 14 per cent of Polish people aged 17–21 declared they could make themselves understood in English (Grabowska and Kalka 2014, 133, 135). By 2005, 73 per cent of under-25s claimed some knowledge of English (Panek, Czapiński and Kotowska 2005, 41). The introduction of mandatory English classes at school helps explain why this generation so readily migrated to Ireland and the United Kingdom. Since 2004 there is evidence, however, that not only does language knowledge facilitate migration from Poland, but also the reverse: migration is supporting better language knowledge within Poland. From 2009 onwards, survey evidence shows that the 25–34-year-old age group knew English better than any section of the adult population, even under-25s, whom one might expect to be the most confident, since they were currently studying languages. This suggests that many of those 25–34-year-olds had previously used English at work abroad. Surveys of return migrants show that most consider language skills to be a significant gain from migration. Return labour migrants to Małopolska in 2010 claimed they had learned much more by using their languages abroad than they had in formal education in Poland (CDS 2010a, 151–2). In surveys in Lower Silesia and Silesia, 87 per cent and 90 per cent of return migrants said they had learned or improved their language skills abroad (CDS 2010b and CDS 2011).

Polish employers indicate the importance today of competences such as independence, entrepreneurship, teamwork and communication skills. However, they also complain that such skills are possessed insufficiently by workers in Poland (Religa 2014, 23–4, 42). It seems that return migration helps address this deficit. Analysis of the Human Capital in Poland survey (2010–14) shows that the workers with the highest level of social skills are disproportionately well-represented among people who had engaged at some time in international migration, or had higher or secondary education, or had lived in cities, or were aged 19–44, or were employed or owned their own businesses.

Although people working in their field of expertise can hone professional skills abroad, even simple manual jobs provide opportunities for learning social skills. Obviously, workplaces vary. If workers interact with one another and customers, this provides opportunities for learning soft skills less easily acquired in other settings – for example, in a fish-freezing

factory, where migrants wear protective clothing and cannot speak to one another. Nonetheless, a migrant in any workplace can find points of difference with their Polish experience that prompt ‘aha’ moments of sudden understanding (Grabowska 2017). The more transferable and universal the skills and competences, the more they can be applied within a Polish workplace after the migrant returns. By contrast, this is not always the case for technical qualifications.

One such competence is entrepreneurship, often associated with return migration across the world. Poland is already a country of small businesses (Tarnawa et al. 2015); migrants help maintain the phenomenon. According to the Human Capital in Poland survey (2010–14), 13 per cent of return migrants, as compared with 11 per cent of stayers, ran their own business. Although there are many reasons why return migrants become entrepreneurs, it is also the case that returnees everywhere report that migration has enhanced their self-confidence. This self-confidence induces many to try their hand at setting up a business. As in other countries, their ideas are often not original: yet another second-hand clothes shop or small building firm does not change the commercial landscape. Sometimes, however, returnees fill gaps in the market. For example, among our interviewees and their relatives, a builder gave up his job abroad to pursue his passion for motorcycles, becoming a successful dealer in foreign motorcycle parts; a former forester in Germany worked as a guide for Germans on hunting trips; and an investment banker from the United States opened the first quality restaurant in her small home town. Migrants on holidays back in Poland also patronise local shops and services and help keep them afloat.

A growth in entrepreneurial attitudes within society connects to increasing individualisation, understood as the greater sense of autonomy and opportunity to shape one’s own life that has been present in post-communist societies since the 1990s. This individualisation contrasts with communist-era collectivism, even if collectivism never reached the levels in Poland that it did, for example, in the neighbouring German Democratic Republic. In the twenty-first century, individualisation is linked to the opportunities offered by more wealth in Polish society and EU-enhanced mobility.

The European Values Survey measures individualism by asking respondents to choose how far they consider themselves ‘autonomous individuals’. The data shows a 2.5 percentage point increase among Poles between 2005 and 2012.<sup>19</sup> This increase must be linked partly to education and income, but must also derive from respondents having had confidence-building experiences such as migration. Garapich (2016c, 159)

describes an 'emphasis on self-determination' among migrants from Sokółka, and Leśniak-Moczuk (2015, 155) similarly claims that return migrants to south-east Poland have become more independent. Our own interviewees mentioned developing a sense of independence through migration. For example, Lucyna, a returnee whom economic hardship had forced (in her view) to go abroad in the midst of her Polish university studies, commented:

Many people who aren't planted in one place don't have narrow views about society being uniform. That because I was brought up in this country I have to do the same as everyone else. Isn't that true? I'll follow the same path as the rest. No, the fact that you can simply have your own opinion, you should think things out for yourself, and so on, that's how it [working abroad] gave me so much. I really grew up.

Religiosity is an area of Polish life where individualisation seems to be proceeding apace. Although the number of Poles believing in God dropped by only four percentage points in the first ten years after EU accession (from 96 per cent in 2005 to 92 per cent in 2014 (Boguszewski 2015a, 37), attendance at weekly mass has fallen below 50 per cent, and many more Poles have begun to consider their faith to be their own affair. In 2014, 52 per cent claimed that 'I am a believer in my own way', an increase of 20 percentage points since 2005. In 2005, the most popular response (66 per cent) had been 'I am a believer and I adhere to the Church's teachings', but by 2014 only 39 per cent of respondents chose this answer (Boguszewski 2015a, 40). Although there are various reasons why Poles might be feeling less close to the Catholic Church as an institution, such as the association of part of the hierarchy with extreme conservative views, and the death of John Paul II, migration also seems to play a role. There is no evidence that migration is turning Poles into atheists. However, it does seem to dent weekly attendance at mass, which is 10 per cent or less among Polish parishioners abroad. The falling-off partly seems linked to practical impediments, but migration also reinforces the idea that religion is a personal choice, as Poles become more familiar with other faiths or different variants of Roman Catholicism, and as part of the process of questioning and reflection that accompanies migration. Hence it is not surprising if return migrants add to the number of Poles who continue to believe in God, but increasingly 'in their own way'.

Migration additionally contributes to individual autonomy by facilitating changing lifestyles. Material aspirations are rising overall in Poland (CBOS 2009, 16), and this connects to the desire to exercise more choice

and enjoy more variety in everyday life – for example in fashion or eating habits. Poles from all locations, including villages, express curiosity about new types of food and a willingness to experiment (Bieńko 2015). Changing eating habits can be explained by factors such as more disposable income for many Poles; the availability of new foods in city shops and eating places, especially in cities; advertising; televised cookery programmes; the Internet; and holidays and migration abroad. However, Bieńko (2015) points to the particular importance of having been abroad. Main (2016b) illustrates how migrants pick up new habits, describing their culinary experiments in Berlin and Barcelona.

Although Domański et al. (2015) show that, in Poland, it is the richest Poles who are more likely to eat exotic dishes, new tastes resulting from migration do not have to be extravagant. For example, Andrzej (interviewed in Lublin) and his wife, return migrants from France and Italy, having acquired a taste for lighter food abroad, fed their children more vegetables and less meat and potatoes than their extended family in Poland. Return migrants also open restaurants serving foreign food – for example, an interviewee who had picked up a taste for Indian food in London reported visiting a new Indian takeaway in Łódź, established by Poles who had also acquired a liking for Indian food in the United Kingdom. An interviewee from a smaller town in central Poland mentioned the success of two new pizza restaurants, both set up by Polish women who had worked in Italy, with their Italian husbands.

Individualisation was signalled by rising levels of homeownership in the 1990s, a trend partly fed by migration, as some small towns in Poland such as Grajewo acquired whole streets built with migrant money. Staszyńska (2008, 109) mentions a housing estate in another small town, locally nicknamed ‘Hamburg’.<sup>20</sup> More recently, the Polish building boom reflects the greatly increased availability of mortgages over the last few years and the activity of property developers in and around cities. In smaller locations, however, many new houses continue to be built and maintained with migration money.

The best example of migrant wealth is Słopnice. . . . Huge numbers of people are working abroad. Generally people round here used to tell jokes about Słopnice, the village was notorious for being so poor. . . . Now, if you go through Słopnice you see that every single house has been renovated, or is totally new. (Jan, Limanowa, 2013)

Ewa, a migrant’s wife from a neighbouring village, commented: ‘If you look at the houses round the Limanowa area . . . they’re lovely. That’s our



mentality, everyone invests in their house . . . To keep it all up, to pay for it all, someone simply has to work abroad.'

Elrick (2008, 1514) also comments on the aesthetics of migrant houses in Polish villages, with features such as rock gardens and gnomes copied from abroad. As Izabela Grabowska argues in [chapter 4](#), the beautification of small-town Poland by individual migrants helps cement a process of regeneration that is mostly taking place thanks to local investments utilising EU structural funds.

Another respect in which Polish lifestyles are changing thanks to new infrastructure is the enhanced opportunities for families to spend leisure time in interesting ways, for example at aqua parks or child-friendly museums, and families living abroad patronise such places when they return for holidays. Families who have lived abroad sometimes become more used to spending leisure time as families. As Krystyna Slany shows in [chapter 6](#), the many Poles who now live in Norway benefit especially from official measures to promote work–life balance. Often, like Norwegians, they spend time on outdoor pursuits, whatever the weather. Grabowska, in [chapter 4](#), illustrates how some Poles who come back from abroad try to convince their contacts in Poland of the importance of creating quality time with children. For example, she describes a pet shop owner in the small town of Trzebnica who tried to spread the idea that it was more important to devote time to children after work and school rather than to cleaning the house.

Although the evidence for increasing gender equality in Poland is somewhat uneven and hard to assess, given recent official support for tightening the abortion law and outlawing the term 'gender', surveys in Poland do show that more people think gender equality is an important value, compared with the more conservative 1990s. Mirosława Grabowska (2013a, 12–26) suggests that approval for an egalitarian division of household roles in 2013 stood at 46 per cent. The presence of highly educated Polish women in many parts of the labour force, and an active women's movement, reinforce the trend towards equality, as did governments before 2015, which introduced EU gender equality principles into Polish legislation. However, it can be hard for women to realise aspirations for greater equality, especially poorer women from small towns. Migration can act against the overall trend and obstruct gender equality, especially when wives of male migrants become entirely dependent on their earnings, as happens in some villages in southern Poland. However, migration also plays the opposite role, promoting greater autonomy for women. Migration is a popular livelihood strategy for mothers with adult children

from economically depressed locations, and can be particularly liberating for women escaping unhappy marriages. Such middle-aged women are often circular migrants, so they frequently return to Poland, where they sometimes inspire other women, such as their daughters, to follow their example and become more independent.

Female migrants the world over tend to entrust their caring responsibilities at home to other women rather than to husbands remaining in the origin country. There are, nonetheless, cases where Polish fathers, thanks to migration livelihood strategies, become more involved in childcare. Jerzy, a builder from near Limanowa, interviewed between spells of work abroad, reported, 'I look after the children. At first it was hard to get used to it, small children, now I don't mind being left with them for longer spells, cooking . . . I'd rather stay at home with my children while I look for decent work abroad.' Survey evidence in Poland shows fathers today being more involved than their own fathers had been in helping organise family leisure time (Krzaklewska et al. 2016). One factor here, as mentioned above, may be links with families abroad in countries such as Norway.

Conservatives in Poland often complain that migration damages family values. However, if so, this is not having a perceptible impact on survey data. With the exception of some very recent data on the youngest Polish adults, the survey Youth 2016 (Grabowska and Gwiazda 2017), surveys consistently show that Poles put the family first: around 80 per cent state that their family constitutes the main purpose of their lives (Grabowska 2013b). In fact, the quite extensive research on Polish families abroad provides plenty of evidence of family solidarity, often enhanced by the trials and tribulations of migration, which draw families together. Moreover, families are acutely conscious of the need carefully to maintain ties with family members across borders. Nuclear families living in other EU countries today have better opportunities than their predecessors to nurture connections with extended family members, involving grandparents as carers, thinking about the latter's care needs in Poland and, in some cases, being actively involved in their care (Krzyżowski 2013). Divorce rates have been rising in Poland, but although this might seem at first glance likely to be attributable to migration, it seems that migration is often an exacerbating factor rather than the main reason for family collapse. Divorce rates are strongly differentiated by region. Among the regions with the most migration, divorce rates remain low in the southern and eastern regions, where church attendance is highest, but are higher in northern and western regions, where the Church and social pressure not to divorce have become less powerful.

Openness to new ideas about gender roles can link to other forms of openness. It is obviously not the case that migration automatically promotes tolerance; nonetheless, it is hard to go abroad and completely fail to notice unfamiliar forms of behaviour. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, a 2014 survey showed that 47 per cent of Poles believed tolerance of alternative viewpoints had increased since the collapse of communism, with 20 per cent believing the opposite (Boguszewski 2014a, 93). The proportion of Poles saying they believed homosexuality 'should not be tolerated' fell from 41 per cent in 2001 to 26 per cent in 2013 (Feliksiak 2013, 62). Between 2004 and 2017, the number of Poles claiming to 'dislike' specific other nationalities dropped, including declines from 34 to 22 per cent for Germans and from 45 to 26 per cent for Jews.

Certain political parties have been stoking fear of refugees since the election campaign of 2015, and support for accepting refugees has fallen sharply in opinion polls; this is a mediated migration impact, similar to impacts in Western countries. This is about the *potential* impact of migration. However, acceptance of immigrant workers is growing. The percentage of Poles who believe that foreigners should be allowed to 'undertake any work' in Poland rose from 9 per cent in 1992 to 56 per cent in 2016 (Feliksiak 2016, 8).

In many societies, there is a link between higher education and higher income levels, and more tolerant viewpoints. Gołębiowska argues that 'religiosity, education, and age, in that order, emerge as the consistently most important influences on Polish tolerance' (2014, 172). Survey evidence suggests that cities, particularly the largest centres such as Warsaw and Wrocław, contain a disproportionate number of tolerant inhabitants; as mentioned earlier in this chapter, their residents are also disproportionately well-educated and well off. With regard to migration as a factor promoting openness, the limited evidence tends to suggest that Polish migrants are more likely than not to acquire more open-to-difference attitudes abroad. This implies change among working-class migrants as well as others. Scholars no longer assume that only hyper-mobile professionals are the most likely group to have cosmopolitan attitudes enhanced by living abroad. They point also to the phenomenon of working-class cosmopolitanism: in fact, ordinary workers often associate with a wider range of people in the receiving country than do professionals, who can live quite narrow lives (Datta 2009; Werbner 1999).

Interview data suggests that migration experience is significant in shaping more tolerant attitudes among some less well-educated and

older Poles and their visitors from Poland, particularly perhaps in some ‘super-diverse’ districts of cities like Madrid or London, where there is no dominant ethnic group. This supports Kuhn’s (2012) assertion that when less well-educated people become more open to difference, it is often as a result of personal experiences. Sometimes they reject racism because they themselves encounter it abroad, so can put themselves in the shoes of others, as in the case of Iwona, a Grajewo resident without a complete secondary education who had worked in southern Italy:

That racism was the worst thing. . . . Why did they treat me like that? How am I worse? A person doesn’t feel that they are worse! Just because they don’t know the language. If you came here, I wouldn’t treat you like that. It should depend on character, what a person is like.

Migration therefore serves as an ‘eye-opener’ for individual members of social groups who, considered overall as social categories in survey data, often appear to be intolerant. Of course, one should not exaggerate trends towards openness in Poland, or the role of migration in contributing to these. Nowicka and Krzyżowski (2017, 15) argue that Polish migrants often engage in ‘aversive racism or homophobia’, avoiding open displays of intolerance only because they realise this is considered unacceptable in certain situations abroad. Moreover, the reverse can also happen, with Polish migrants mimicking racist ideas which they pick up from local residents (Fox and Mogilnicka 2017). In addition, xenophobic social media link Poles in Poland and foreign countries. Racist attitudes held by Polish migrants towards people living in Western countries become conflated with Poles in Poland’s rejection of Muslim refugees and mix together on the Internet in a shared nationalist discourse.

It is too early to assess the impact of immigration in Poland, although it has suddenly become a mass phenomenon thanks to the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian workers and students. As of 2017, the main impacts are to fill gaps in the Polish labour market and to add to the ethnic diversity of the resident population. However, contact with foreigners in Poland can contribute towards attitudes to difference. As illustrated in chapter 10, it allows Poles to reflect on similarities with Poles’ own status as migrants in foreign countries and sometimes also to practise foreign language skills and other cultural knowledge learned abroad. Hence it can help entrench greater openness.

## 8. Conclusion: EU mobility and social change

*The European Union provides the closest thing to a ‘laboratory’ on open borders, allowing us to examine how reducing barriers to mobility might play out. . . . The current knowledge base on the economic and social impacts of free movement is slim – in part because the flexible, multifarious forms intra-EU mobility take obscures it from official data sources.*

Benton and Petrović 2013, 1

The impact of introducing the free movement of people has mostly been studied in terms of how it leads to new patterns of migration, often termed ‘mobility’. The nature of the social impact on sending countries might also be changed by EU free movement, but this type of change is hardly studied. The one follows from the other. First, as often acknowledged, EU mobility rights lead to the creation of more intense transnational fields. These help determine mobility patterns, but, as we have seen, they also shape the lives of stayers. Second, within the EU mobility laboratory one can observe very diverse types of mobility. This diversity in turn has implications for lives and livelihoods in the sending country, creating numerous channels for impact – for instance, from family visits and educational exchanges – in addition to the standard economic remittances typically studied.

Third, the evolution of EU refugee and asylum policy in 2015 and its agreement to apportion Syrian refugees between member states has considerably bolstered the power of right-wing populist parties in CEE, including Poland. Finally, the fast tempo of change, with its corollaries, speedy network building and a rapid transition towards migration for settlement, has considerable impact on the countries of origin. As [chapter 9](#) discusses, it has led to the emergence of Polish society abroad. However, the rapidity and recentness of these changes, and the threat of Brexit hanging over citizens from continental EU countries residing in the United Kingdom, also raise the question of how secure such hastily constructed transnational ties will prove to be. We began our discussion of social change in this chapter by stating that we were interested in ‘change as an ongoing process’. Our story therefore remains unfinished and, in [chapter 11](#), we suggest how further research might be conducted to continue what we have begun.

## Notes

- 1 'Bartosz', interviewed by Anne White in 2016. All interviewees have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities.
- 2 A 2013 survey, however, found that only 45 per cent of respondents self-identified as middle class (Roguska and Boguszewski 2013a, 47).
- 3 [http://www.cbos.pl/PL/trendy/trendy.php?trend\\_parametr=stosunek\\_do\\_integracji\\_UE](http://www.cbos.pl/PL/trendy/trendy.php?trend_parametr=stosunek_do_integracji_UE), last accessed 1 October 2017.
- 4 Knowing of pogroms in some localities, Jews elsewhere often felt threatened by violence as well as fleeing actual poverty and discrimination (Lederhendler 2014, 174).
- 5 Warsaw was the only city studied by the Warsaw University Centre of Migration Research in the 1990s.
- 6 In an extreme case, nearly one in four people aged 25–9 from Olsztyn went abroad (Anacka and Okólski 2010, 158). See White (2010b) on youth migration from small towns.
- 7 Exceptionally, Konrad was interviewed in English, at his request.
- 8 See Okólski and Salt (2014) for detailed discussion of 'why so many came' to the United Kingdom.
- 9 Nonetheless, 2002 and 2011 census data showed the same regions in the lead. In 2011, per 1000 population, 106 inhabitants of Opole Silesia, 91 in Podlasie and 84 in Podkarpacie had migrated abroad. In Mazowieckie the number was 28.
- 10 GUS estimates are based on a combination of Polish and receiving country data. The proportion of labour migrants was also different in different regions.
- 11 Exceptions include Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski–Southampton, Mielec–Jersey, Sanok and Sokółka–London.
- 12 Strzelecki et al. (2015) provide some information on the Social Diagnosis sample.
- 13 Grabowska's and White's projects are described in chapters 4 and 7.
- 14 Martin and Radu (2012, 111), using European Social Survey data for 2006–8, estimate that 8 per cent of the active population aged 24–65 had worked abroad for at least 6 months in the past 10 years.
- 15 For example, CDS (2010a, 100) found that almost every migrant who returned to Małopolska originated from the region, and about 90 per cent returned to their home town or village. 7.3 per cent of residents of other towns in the region moved to Kraków after return.
- 16 *Newsweek Polska*, *Polityka*, *Wprost* and *Gość Niedzielny*.
- 17 *Fakt* and *Metro*.
- 18 'People at risk of poverty or social exclusion'. [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=t2020\\_50&language=en](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=t2020_50&language=en), last accessed 8 December 2017.
- 19 Respondents are asked whether they agree (on a four-point scale) that 'I see myself as an autonomous individual'. See <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOnline.jsp>. 77.1 per cent/79.6 per cent agreed in 2005/2012 and 15.4 per cent/15 per cent) disagreed.
- 20 Brzozowski (2014, 274–5) calculated that in 2004–8, returnees to Małopolska used their foreign earnings to purchase housing equivalent to 10 per cent of new housing that became available in the region. However, because they did not always buy new houses, the total new housing bought by migrants would have been less than 10 per cent.

### 3

## Literature review and theory

*The impact of migration on sending countries, with particular reference to Central and Eastern Europe*

ANNE WHITE AND IZABELA GRABOWSKA

### 1. Chapter scope and aims

This chapter explains how we understand key concepts for our topic and explores dimensions of the concepts that are particularly useful for understanding the arguments later in the book. Like most other migration scholars today, we are convinced of the need to apply a transnational lens. However, our book proceeds from the premise that most other analytical frameworks used to study migration impact are only partly helpful, both in general, and for understanding CEE in particular. [Chapter 3](#) therefore explains conceptual shortcomings in mainstream literature. This justifies our alternative, inside-out approach, which focuses on mapping social change in sending countries before considering how migration contributes to change, often through a process that can be labelled social remitting.

The chapter builds on our own recent research and conceptual work. Together with colleagues, especially Michał Garapich, we have been developing and operationalising Levitt's (1998) concept of social remittances. Standard cost-benefit, often developmentalist approaches to impact are not the whole story. Of course migration does bring social and economic costs and benefits, and these are relevant to the development of countries and subnational regions. However, migration's influences are also wider and subtler. These nuances can only be appreciated by microscopic analysis of qualitative data. Moreover, since stayers are not passive recipients of change ([Carling 2008](#), 1455), it is also important

to look beyond migrants, the natural subject matter of migration scholarship. By virtue of living within transnational social spaces, stayers too create change in the sending society. This is the least researched type of impact. In general, stayers are neglected in migration research (Grabowska 2016; Hjälm 2014). Our chapter explains how they can be better included.

Another function of this chapter is to review scholarly and policy-based literature on the impact of migration on other sending countries, particularly in CEE. Probably the largest number of publications is about Poland, but there is also an emerging Romanian- and English-language literature on migration's impact on Romania.<sup>1</sup> Fewer academic English-language publications discuss other countries, despite huge flows from Albania,<sup>2</sup> Lithuania, Latvia and Moldova. By drawing comparisons, we set Poland in regional context. We hope that the concepts and methodology developed in this book will be applied by other scholars to different countries within the region.

Analysis of migration influence should distinguish between different layers where impact occurs: societal, household and individual; national, regional and local. It should also distinguish between types of migrant. Migration impact on sending-country populations depends on who migrates, for how long and to where; why they go/return; and what they do while they are abroad and after they come back. Receiving countries also vary, so migration-related influences from one will be different from the next. This is illustrated, for example, in Carletto and Kilic's 2011 study of the lower occupational mobility in Albania of returnees from unskilled labour in Greece, compared with people who had performed more highly skilled jobs in Italy and further afield. We argue that only by employing the concept of social remittances and conducting qualitative research can scholars gain a sufficiently close-up view of these interwoven combinations of variables creating migration influence.

Existing literature tends to address two themes: development and return migration. It sits within larger literatures on those topics. Since development is a policy goal, literature is normative, considering 'good' and 'bad' outcomes. It sometimes blends comfortably into popular and media analyses of migration impact, which similarly adopt a cost-benefit approach. Return migration research more often explores the motivations and experiences of individuals, and local return conditions, rather than wider social impact, and it does not always have a policy focus. The topics of development and return migration overlap, particularly in recent years, given widespread interest among policymakers in 'harnessing' return migration.



In contemporary CEE, these scholarly preoccupations with development and return give pause for thought. How can we understand migration impact in the case of countries that have high United Nations Human Development indicators and cannot be labelled ‘developing’? If ‘development is about improving the life conditions that are faced by the global majority’ (Potter et al. 2012, 3) how can the migration impact literature be adapted to suit high-income and higher-middle income countries in CEE, countries whose citizens are part of the ‘global minority’? We should also ask whether ‘return’, with its conventional implications of permanent return, is an appropriate concept for mobile EU citizens.

The chapter is structured as follows. After discussing key concepts, particularly ‘diaspora’, ‘transnational ties’ and ‘return’, and reflecting on collective and individual impacts, we mention some scholarly findings about costs and benefits for CEE sending countries, and briefly discuss pros and cons of this approach. We move on to critique the migration-development nexus as a specific, policy-oriented framework for understanding costs and benefits. Having demonstrated its insufficiency, we explore the more promising avenue of social remittances as an analytical tool, and explain how we will be combining it with an ‘inside-out’ approach that looks at social trends before factoring in migration influence.

## 2. Concepts: Diaspora, transnational ties, return

The impact of migration is commonly seen as the creation of gaps in the sending country – brain drain, skills shortages, ‘unemployment export’, a reduced working-age population supporting an increasingly aged population, and so on. However, in recent decades scholars and policymakers have become more aware that migration creates ties as well as gaps: ties with foreign receiving countries that have impact on sending ones. Kapur (2010, 14), writing about India, distinguishes four channels of impact: a prospect channel (where hope of future migration shapes stayers’ behaviour), an absence channel, a diaspora channel and a return channel. This section focuses on understanding these transnational links and, in particular, diaspora and return channels of impact.

As Brubaker (2005) and Faist (2010) discuss, the term ‘diaspora’ has been stretched in recent years. It has been losing connotations of forced dispersal, with a longing to return to a lost homeland. Although this remains relevant for refugees, ‘diaspora’ is often used for any group of migrants originating from the same country. In keeping with its original meaning, however, ‘diaspora’ is often used in the singular, as if all

co-nationals scattered around different foreign countries shared a single group membership.

The 'diaspora' construct is one way of imagining migrants collectively. Morawska (2011, 1030) refers to it as an ideal type. Diaspora help for sending countries is often considered an attractive alternative to migrant return, and a key to positive migration impact. Since UNESCO's 1970s programme for encouraging diasporas to diffuse scientific knowledge in countries of origin (Raghuram 2009, 106), policymakers who believe migration impact can be shaped have adopted the term, together with its built-in assumptions of ethnic solidarity. The impression that a diaspora really exists as a single unit is bolstered by specific migrants claiming to speak and act on its behalf (Sinatti and Horst 2015, 136). Indeed, Brubaker (2005, 1) suggests diaspora should be considered 'not as a bounded entity but as an idiom, stance and claim'. Although our book does not refer to a Polish diaspora, on the grounds that the phrase implies a misleading degree of unity, we do use 'diaspora organisations'. These denote groups with a strong sense of diaspora identity, which claim to speak for fellow nationals abroad. As a result, they often ignore the separate interests of less powerful co-nationals such as women and manual workers.

Migrants can help increase income and wealth in their origin countries via 'social units such as hometown, religious, ethnic, village or alumni associations' (Faist 2016, 334). In many countries, migrants display impressive concern for their communities of origin. For example, Xiang (2013, 188) writes about villagers living in Beijing who 'made generous financial contributions to traditional ceremonies and public projects such as road constructions even though the villages were almost empty most of the time due to outmigration'. Hometown associations are often seen as the quintessential development tool, and are quite common in many countries across the world (Goldring 2004; Orozco and Rouse 2007).

However, as far as we know, the literature provides no examples of hometown associations among CEE migrants living in western Europe.<sup>3</sup> Moreh (2014, 1764), writing about Alcalá, near Madrid, argues that Romanians abroad do not form hometown associations and suggests that, in the one case where a group did support a twinning arrangement, this was an exception to their normal preoccupation with members' affairs in Spain. Although CEE policymakers would like to utilise diaspora organisations (Hazans 2016b, 338; Nevinskaitė 2016, 139),<sup>4</sup> migrant organisations are usually concerned about the affairs and cultural identity of co-nationals living in the receiving society (see also Thaut 2009, 220, on Lithuania). Rare instances of CEE diaspora engagement seem to be based

on economic self-interest. An example is the pressure exercised through social media by Moldovans living abroad on the Moldovan government to lower road fees for cars with foreign licence plates (Cucuş 2015).

In the case of contemporary CEE migration, which is a mass migration of individuals, claims by an organisation to speak on behalf of a 'diaspora' should be treated with care. It is more helpful to understand the situation as being one where members of a certain society have to some extent transferred themselves abroad. 'Polish society abroad' is theorised in chapter 9. The most significant point to note here is that 'society abroad' emerges thanks to the creation of dense transnational fields.

Nieswand (2014, 404) writes of a 'wave of transnationalization of the Ghanaian society that was stimulated by mass migration from Ghana over the last few decades'. This phenomenon equally characterises other sending societies. Empirical research across the world testifies to an intensification of migrants' links with friends and relatives in the origin country through transnational practices and 'simultaneity, or living lives that incorporate daily activities, routines, and institutions located both in a destination country and transnationally' (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, 1003). According to Guarnizo, Sanchez and Roach (1999, 369) 'transnational migrants tend to merge into a single social continuum (that is, transnational social field), rather than separate their settlement "here" and their communities "there"'. Transnational activities include using social media that allow migrants to conduct their lives simultaneously with friends and family physically based in the other country, as well as more traditional practices such as eating ethnic food, following news and popular culture, paying visits home, and so on. Through such practices, migrants develop some sense of 'double belonging' (Vertovec 2004, 975), 'dual membership' (Levitt 2001) or, in a formulation which hints that more than two countries or locations can be involved, a 'diversity of reference points' (Bocagni 2014, 2). However, in different settings abroad, and at different moments, one membership is felt more strongly than the other. As Castles (2002, 1159) observes, 'Individuals and groups constantly negotiate choices with regard to their participation in host societies, their relationships with their homelands, and their links to co-ethnics.'

Without using a transnational lens, it is hard to understand how migrants and stayers function in today's world, and our thinking remains trapped in the 'container' of methodological nationalism. The existence of transnational social space affects the emotional lives of many millions of non-migrants, such as the hero of the Allegro advertisement described in chapter 1. In fact, in high-migration countries such as Poland or the United Kingdom, it is hard to agree with Carling (2008) that any sending

and receiving country residents live lives completely untouched by migration and therefore outside transnational social fields.

The term ‘transnational families’ captures this idea of families living in two or more countries, although it is used differently by different scholars. It refers alternatively to nuclear families split between two countries, when migrants maintain a ‘shadow household’ (Faist 2004, 8) in the sending country, and to nuclear families who live together abroad but maintain transnational links with extended family in the country of origin. This is a particularly sensitive topic on which, as Slany shows in chapter 6, scholarly, evidence-based interpretations can contradict assumptions made by politicians and journalists. Caregivers are by nature prone to worries about the adequacy of the care they provide, and to feelings of guilt if it might be perceived as falling short of an ideal. Caring for relatives at a geographical distance magnifies such concerns, particularly when the norm in sending societies such as those in eastern and southern Europe is that female family members should be at home to fulfil caring responsibilities. Mădroane (2016, 239), for example, writing on Romanian media anxieties about children ‘left behind’, mentions ‘cultural perceptions that proximity is a condition for care’.

The transnational lens permits a close-up view of the actual, many and varied types of relationship that are maintained transnationally. Scholars writing about migrants with good opportunities for engaging in transnational practices point out that absence of migrants from relatives in the sending country has a different quality today from in the past. More intense and real-time contact, thanks to technology, ‘softens’ absence and facilitates more intense transnational caring than used to be possible. Nedelcu, for example, quotes a Romanian engineer in Toronto who reported: ‘This evening I have to baby-sit. When my wife is home alone [in Bucharest] and she has to go downstairs, for example to prepare dinner, she focuses the webcam on the babies. I keep an eye on them and if one of them starts to cry, I let her know by SMS.’ She concludes that ‘in the digital age of communication, family ties have not really weakened’ (Nedelcu 2012, 1351). Other scholars are less upbeat. While recognising that migrant relatives often try their best, they also highlight that they can find it hard to provide intensive care at a distance. (See, e.g. Vullnetari and King 2008 on Albania; on villagers in Bulgaria and Romania, see Kulcsár and Brădăţan 2014.)

Transnational ties are also economic. Many households practise complex livelihood strategies, where one member’s labour abroad facilitates livelihoods in the origin country. For example, Nagy (2009, 8–10) describes the pluriactivity (*pluriactivité*) of households in Maramureş: migrants send money back to Romania, which families invest in building

and improving guest houses for foreign tourists; these relatives then invest profits from guest houses to subsidise another family member to go abroad. Migrants also send long-distance advice ('My son phoned me from Spain a week ago to say he had already sent the money and how I should do the work') and, back in Romania for the summer, use their know-how to act as 'cultural brokers' and liaise with foreign guests. Grill and Anghel describes the upward social mobility of Slovak and Romanian Roma (Anghel 2016; Grill 2012, 1273–4) who enhance their status relative to their fellow villagers by temporary spells of working abroad.

These are not merely household-level economic activities, but are embedded in a social context. The term 'transnational social space' indicates that 'social life is not confined by nation-state boundaries' (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, 1007). In some senses, whole countries seem to be linked by a dense web of migration-created ties, creating societies that spread across borders (see chapter 9), but in other contexts, regions or even localities have their own transnational identities. As discussed in chapter 2, regional migration cultures, otherwise known as 'cultures of migration' (Kandel and Massey 2002) are noticeable in Poland, as indeed in other CEE countries such as Romania (Horváth 2008) or Estonia (Nugin 2014). We use the term to denote norms about who should migrate, why, how and where; sets of meanings attributed to migration; and the assumption that international migration is a commonplace livelihood strategy (White 2016d; 2017).

In such locations, migration networks constantly expand, as migration breeds migration. This is one of migration's most important impacts. Moreover, one aspect of this culture is often a preference for international over internal migration, which Bélorgey et al. (2012, 3) claim typifies the whole post-communist region. International and internal migration strategies exist in relation to one another (King and Skeldon 2010); in the case of contemporary CEE, it seems that international migration depresses internal migration. As Hazans (2016b, 314) writes about Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, when everyone now has close family members and friends abroad, international migration becomes the 'new normal'.

To sum up, since the launch of the transnational perspective in migration studies by Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1992), a considerable literature has emerged, reflecting the fact that most migration scholars agree this perspective is central to understanding contemporary migration and its impact on sending and receiving societies. Our book examines transnational practices, identities, families and livelihoods, and considers how individuals, both migrants and – most importantly for

our argument – stayers, are changed by living in transnational social spaces.

Turning to 'return', it is a relief to use a word that, unlike 'diaspora' or 'transnational', is used in everyday speech. This is generally an advantage for qualitative researchers conducting interviews, but it can lead to ambiguity. As Long and Oxfeld (2004, 3) remark, 'Return is a category that people themselves use, embellish and understand.' The ambiguity arises because different people imply different degrees of finality to the concept. For many, 'return' implies 'return for good', though this is often not spelled out. When considering the topic, it is wise to keep in mind the question 'return for how long?'

Our discussion starts from the premise that return is not 'the end of the story' but a process of migration backwards. It therefore shares nearly all the same properties and complexities as the original migration move. (See discussion in [White 2017](#), 200–1.) Return can best be thought of as intertwining with integration experiences and transnational practices, in both countries. It often seems to happen that migrants experiment with return, but this experience puts them off living in the origin country, and they perform a 'double return' ([White 2014a, 2014b](#)), sometimes to settle abroad, definitively removing themselves from the sending country population (see, e.g. Hazans 2016a on double returns from Latvia). Sometimes they continue circulating between their origin country and places abroad.

Media in both sending and receiving countries have a tendency to speculate about 'return waves' of migration (see, e.g. [King and Mai 2008](#), 235, on Albania, or media interest in post-Brexit referendum return from the United Kingdom). If such waves took place, they would have profound impacts on both sending and receiving countries. The global economic crisis did result in quite a lot of return migration globally ([OECD 2017](#), 246) but did not produce a return wave to CEE ([Barcevičius et al. 2012](#); [Benton and Petrovic 2013](#); [OECD 2013](#); [Zaiceva and Zimmermann 2016](#)).<sup>5</sup> This suggests that the EU mobility area – where it is possible to sit out crises with support from the receiving country welfare state, or fairly easily move to a different EU destination – may not be conducive to return migration waves.

Return in fact does not usually occur in waves. Why migrants return, and how well they succeed, are individual, often emotional matters, depending on a range of emic and etic factors ([King 2000](#)). It seems that 'non-economic factors generally weigh more heavily in the return decision than do economic factors, certainly in comparison to their role in the original decision to emigrate' ([King 2000](#), 15). Even if migrants return

because their job abroad ends, this is not strictly an economic reason, since emotional ties mean that migrants usually return home rather than to a new location in the sending country. A study of Hungarian, Latvian, Polish and Romanian returnees during the global economic crisis concluded that most ‘went back for family reasons or because they had achieved their emigration goals’ (Barcevičius et al. 2012, 1). The persisting wage gap between old and new EU member states reduces the economic incentive to return (Kaczmarczyk, Anacka and Fihel 2016, 222).

The fact that many returnees choose, for sentimental reasons, to return to locations with few economic prospects calls into question the assumption made in policy literature (see below) that return migration aids development. It is also important because migrants already have preconceptions about their home locations, for example, scepticism about their capacity for change. On the other hand, they have an emotional investment in the place, which should prompt them to wish to improve it.

Typologies of return migrant have been constructed to aid understanding the complexity of return. Often, typologies relate to migrants’ socio-demographic characteristics. For example, it is noted that highly educated returnees will have different impacts than manual workers.<sup>6</sup> Other typologies focus on the success/failure and innovatory/conservative dimensions of return, building on the insights of Cerase (1974). Cerase distinguished between returns of failure, conservatism (where the returnee assimilates back into the sending society without attempting to change it), retirement and innovation. The return of any migrant changes the composition of the origin society, so all returns are significant. However, the ‘return of innovation’ is the most interesting for analysing how change might be diffused more widely. Since returnees act in transnational social spaces, transnational approaches are particularly helpful for understanding their potential influence (Cassarino 2004, 262, 265). As discussed in chapter 4, many factors contribute to whether migrants become ‘agents of change’ (Grabowska, Garapich, et al. 2017).

Reintegration post return is particularly well-researched. Carling, Mortensen and Wu (2011, 3) list 257 publications on the topic. As emphasised in literature on immigrant integration, integration is a two-way process, involving both the migrant and also the wider society and state. Successful return can be supported by origin country institutions (see, e.g. Kaska 2013, 34–7, on Estonia; Mereuta 2013, 134, on Romania; OECD 2017, on non-EU countries). Barcevičius et al. (2012, 44–5) suggest that in Poland, Romania and Latvia returnees are *a priori* sceptical about official initiatives and not much aware of their existence. Some non-European countries, such as Indonesia, accord returning migrants a hero’s welcome

(Fardah 2012). However, other societies receive returnees less enthusiastically. Latvia (Barcevičius et al. 2012, 44), Lithuania (Nevinskaitė 2016),<sup>7</sup> Estonia (Anniste, Pukkonen and Paas 2017, 106) and Poland (Dzięglewski 2016; Dziekońska 2012, 249) are probably not the only CEE countries where emigrants and returnees can feel disliked by some employers and neighbours. This in turn can promote pessimism about whether returnees can effect change in their country of origin. Particularly delicate is the integration of 'returnees' who were born abroad as descendants of Cold War émigrés. This helps explain the relatively limited impact of a specific type of post-communist 'return', when second- or third-generation co-nationals migrated after 1989 to countries such as the Czech Republic and Croatia (Tomić 2016) or Poland (Fihel and Górny 2013; Górny and Kolankiewicz 2002; Górny and Osipovič 2006, 99–100; Klein-Hitpass 2016).

### 3. Socio-economic costs and benefits of migration for Central and Eastern Europe

Scholarly, educational and policy literature tends to view the impact of migration in cost-benefit terms; literature on CEE is no exception. With regard to individual countries, for example, Thaut (2009, 191), analysing post-2004 migration from Lithuania, concludes:

The free movement of workers has helped to relieve pressure on the domestic labour market, drive down unemployment, place upward pressure on wages, and increase the remittances rate to Lithuania. However, . . . recent emigration has introduced labour market shortages, placed greater demographic pressure on the country, and increased the likelihood of brain drain.

Mereuta (2013, 131,133), writing about Romania, provides a similar, economically focused list, but also points to some psychological and social consequences, with a hint of regional differentiation:

In spite of this initial beneficial effect on the national labour market (which is still characterised by a low level of job availability), the sheer volume of labour emigration gave rise to several negative effects: labour shortages, skill gaps, distorted wage demand; depopulated areas, deepening of regional discrepancies; social problems with dependants (especially children) left behind; inflationary



pressure (due to remittances) [and] lower levels of economic activity in the remaining population. Money sent back by Romanian migrant workers represented, in a way, a second form of “welfare” deeply affecting recipients’ willingness to work. [More positively]: The last decade of migration in Romania triggered major social change. Traditionally immobile populations (mostly rural) suddenly benefited from the opportunities offered by labour migration with direct positive effects on the living standards of those back home (spouses, children, parents) as well as on individual adaptability.

These extracts nicely illustrate many of the points made in textbooks about the impact on sending countries globally (e.g. [Castles and Miller 2009](#)).<sup>8</sup> The same puzzles occur everywhere. When and why is the overall impact on labour markets and local wages negative or positive? Do remittances stimulate local and individual household economies and lead to more income equality between regions and households? Do they create a more skilled and entrepreneurial population, or the reverse? Exactly what is the impact on families – who make their own cost-benefit calculations as to whether the benefits of migration compensate for the suffering caused by absence?

Recent overviews of the region include Bélorgey et al. (2012), OECD (2013) and Kahanec and Zimmermann (2016b), all of which compare the economic impact of migration across a range of post-communist countries. (See [chapter 5](#) of this volume for some cross-country comparisons.) Remittances are particularly important outside the EU: in 2016, in non-EU member states of south-east Europe, remittances contributed a proportion of GDP ranging from 8.5 per cent in Serbia to 21.7 per cent in Moldova ([Knomad 2017](#), 23), but they are much lower in Central Europe (e.g. about 2.5 per cent of Polish GDP in 2007, the year of the most migration ([Kaczmarczyk, Anacka and Fihel 2016](#), 145)). Zaiceva (2014) cites studies suggesting that migration is fuelling increased wages and reduced unemployment in a number of countries. Prymachenko, Fregert and Andersson (2013, 2696) calculated that for the CEE countries which joined the EU in 2004, unemployment decreased during the period 2000–7 on average by at least 3.4 per cent for every 10 per cent increase in migration. However, Kaczmarczyk, in [chapter 5](#) of this volume, investigates this connection in more detail, showing that one should not assume that migration-related ‘unemployment export’ is the main reason for falling unemployment figures, at least in Poland.

Scholars of CEE migration before and after 2004 have found evidence that migration enhances knowledge, skills and well-being (‘human

capital') (see, e.g. Radu 2003; Straubhaar and Wolburg 1999). Baláž and Williams (2004) and Williams and Baláž (2005) showed the importance of tacit and transferable skills in their analysis of skilled return migrants to Slovakia. Returnees highlighted language and communication skills and emphasised how migration had changed their perspectives, self-awareness and self-confidence.

However, the social impact of migration – except insofar as individual migrants improve their human capital – is frequently seen as problematic. Brain drain is identified, as is 'brain squandering' (Bartha, Fedyuk and Zentai 2015), when migrants work in simple manual jobs not commensurate with their education (see also Kahanec and Zimmermann 2016a, 421). Extensive migration can also threaten the sustainability of sending country welfare systems (see, e.g. Hazans 2016b, 340, on the Baltic countries).

There is a tendency in some of the literature to simplify social effects. Phrases such as 'abandoned children' (for those with one parent working abroad), 'families left behind' and 'care drain' are also stigmatising towards families concerned, and can create a mental fog that inhibits careful analysis of the social impact. The costs and benefits of (e)migration are also political, and this contributes to the tendency to oversimplify issues. Mădroane (2016, 234) demonstrates how Romanian newspapers with different political viewpoints adopt different interpretations of the costs and benefits of international migration. A more nuanced approach is advocated by scholars with a closer knowledge of actual families and local communities, for example Piperno, writing about Romania (2012) or Markova on Albania (2010b). In local communities, sacrifices made by migrating parents for the sakes of their families are often regarded as laudable, while the same behaviour is condemned as selfish in superficial journalistic analysis and nationalist political discourse.

One might question how far it makes sense to consider CEE as a single region for purposes of typical cost-benefit comparison, given the very different scale of migration from, for example, Slovenia, compared with Lithuania or Albania, and its varied nature. For example, more children are separated from their parents by migration in countries with more classic labour migration, such as Romania and Moldova, than by migration in countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Estonia, where a higher proportion of migrants are young and single. The varied levels of economic development also impede comparative analysis. Tallinn can hardly be compared with an Albanian village. Assuming that enlargement and social cohesion policy aimed at creating regional convergence across the EU is ongoing, it can however be helpful for predicting future

trajectories to compare countries that are more behind with those more advanced in that process, as indeed to compare regions and locations at different stages of development within larger and regionally differentiated EU member states like Poland and Romania. Migration effects are often more visible in countries, regions and individual locations where other sources of income and investment (notably EU structural funds) are less available. However, this suggests that the true impact of migration can only be understood when the influence of migration is seen in conjunction with the influence of other factors. It is only partly helpful to weigh up migration influences against one another, as in a typical cost-benefit analysis.

## 4. The migration-development nexus

The cost-benefit framework often seems fragmentary. ‘Development’ adds cohesion, providing context within which to conceptualise costs and benefits, and imparting a sense that societies are moving in a clear direction. It can therefore appear a more satisfactory analytical tool, even though it suffers from the same narrowness created by inherent normative assumptions, and even though it ignores social trends that have no bearing on development. The developmental approach also has the virtue of being focused on transnational ties created by migration, whereas more old-fashioned versions of the cost-benefit approach tend to concentrate on losses such as brain drain. Moreover, developmental approaches can encompass different kinds of transnational mobility, including visits ([European Commission 2013](#), 3). Although development literature sometimes focuses only on economic development, development is often understood more broadly, to encompass outcomes in health, education, gender equality, and so on. In the latter regard, whereas cost-benefit approaches are used by conservatives to lament the deleterious effects of migration for family life, developmental approaches view women’s empowerment through migration as positive (see, e.g. [United Nations 2005](#)). Finally, a developmental approach can be sociological and based on qualitative research, and can focus on development as a *process*, in keeping with our own approach to social change as process rather than outcome. To Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2013, 15), writing about social remittances, ‘development is as much, if not more, about the ideological shifts, behavioral changes, institutional learning and capacity building that occur along the journey to a “development goal” as about the destination.’

This chapter is not the place for more detailed discussion of the migration-development nexus literature (on which see, e.g. [De Haas 2012](#); [Glick Schiller 2012](#); [Keijzer, Héraud and Frankenhaeuser 2016](#); [Raghuram 2009](#)), although some points should be noted. The first is the existence of differences of opinion about whether migration promotes development or the reverse. De Haas (2010, 227) suggests ‘the debate on migration and development has swung back and forth like a pendulum, from developmental optimism in the 1950s and 1960s, to neo-Marxist pessimism over the 1970s and 1980s, towards more optimistic views in the 1990s and 2000s’. Newland (2013) concurs that benefits for sending countries are currently seen to outweigh disadvantages. De Haas (2012, 19) suggests his own compromise position: ‘Migration tends to reinforce (pre)existing trends . . . under unfavourable development conditions, migration may undermine development; but under favourable conditions, it is likely to accelerate such positive trends.’ Writing about Morocco, De Haas (2007) also stresses the regionally differentiated nature of migration and development, a point that is relevant to CEE, with its often pronounced regional inequalities.

A shortcoming with the approach is that migration-development optimists tend to assume that migration can be managed. Sinatti and Horst (2015, 134) found that migration-development professionals conceived of development as ‘the planned activities of Western professional development actors’. As Raghuram (2009, 105) observes, ‘almost all theorisations of this link [between migration and development] assume migration to be something that can be contained, regulated or influenced’, despite extensive empirical evidence about the failure of immigration control except in very authoritarian regimes (e.g. [Hampshire 2013](#); [Steiner 2009](#)). We discussed above the unrealistic assumptions built into the concept of ‘diaspora engagement’, which is a main plank of migration-development policy.

‘Mobility’, the term favoured by EU institutions, implies that a migration and development lens is inappropriate, since EU citizens’ mobility is not really international migration. EU publications such as the European Commission’s *Maximising the Development Impact of Migration* (2013) do not consider member states as sending countries needing development. Development within the EU is through funding for poorer regions (a completely different budget) and EU-funded research on ‘migration’ and development logically tends to ignore member-state sending countries. It looks at countries outside the EU, often with a view to preventing migration to Europe by promoting development. In general, international

organisations tend to exclude CEE from analyses of migration and development, as do migration scholars without a specialist interest in the region (see, e.g. textbooks by Bartram, Poros and Monfore 2014; Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014, 69–80.) Glick Schiller (2012), in her article ‘Unravelling the Migration and Development Web’, refers only to ‘the development of impoverished countries *outside of Europe*’ (our italics).

A number of scholars of south-east Europe do couch their arguments in developmental terms (e.g. on Romania: Careja 2013; Rotilă 2008; on Albania: Carletto and Kilic 2011; King, Uruçi and Vullnetari 2011; Miluka et al. 2010; on Moldova: Ellerman 2005) as well as, occasionally, other parts of CEE (e.g. Thaut 2009 on Lithuania). However, since CEE countries are newcomers to the migration-development world, their governments tend not to have elaborate policies for ‘harnessing’ migration potential. Some scholars argue a case for harnessing: Careja (2013), for example, criticises Romania’s ‘laissez-faire’ approach and Thaut (2009, 214) suggests that to maximise the development potential of migration, ‘governments must pursue policy designed to manage and not control migration’.

The usefulness of ‘development’ as a goal for most of post-communist CEE is questionable, except in the sense of economic development in poorer regions. If development is defined broadly, for instance as by UN Human Development Indicators, CEE countries already score highly on levels of education, healthcare, nutrition, and so on. Migration opens channels of influence between countries in eastern and western parts of Europe, but it may be difficult to class such influence as having an impact on development and therefore to apply the usual development literature terminology.

An exception, perhaps, is the literature on encouraging highly skilled migrants to spread their expertise for the benefit of their country of origin, although the remarks above about absence of hometown associations of people from CEE suggest that migrants from the region have a more individualistic approach, and that evidence of ‘brain circulation’ and knowledge transfer should be sought only in the biographies of individual migrants.

Using the term ‘development’ could be positively unhelpful on the level of discourse, both because it implies a greater gap between sending and receiving countries than actually exists, and because it feeds into an unhelpful ‘catch-up’ narrative about post-communist Europe. Even a more general modernisation approach to migration-influenced social change (see, e.g. Sandu 2010 on Romania) needs to be employed with caution.

In CEE, the influence of migration is more likely to take place in the area of subtle changes in norms, values and behaviour. The ‘development’ umbrella is too small to cover the multitude of different influences. Moreover, although development literature has a healthy emphasis on transnational ties, its focus on outcomes in the sending country can promote unrealistic expectations of migrants’ behaviour at the receiving society end of the transnational social space. Migrants are sometimes assumed to automatically facilitate positive outcomes for the sending country, whereas they may be much more interested in looking after their own interests in the receiving country.

## 5. Social remittances

Rather than focusing on diasporas and their supposed collective impact, we need an approach that is not normative, an approach that understands how individual migrants change attitudes and behaviour as a result of being abroad, and how this affects stayers. Non-developmental return migration literature is promising here, particularly, as already mentioned, the abundant publications on reintegration. The complex mutual process of accommodation between returning or visiting migrant and the receiving society – in this case, the origin society – is clearly the site for a great deal of migration’s social impact. It follows that the social remittances literature provides a suitable framework for understanding our topic.

Given that ‘social remittances’ is a new concept, but not a new phenomenon, its literature builds on previous explorations of the social impact of migration. Developing the concept has helped researchers to home in more accurately on how migrants acquire new ideas, values, beliefs, practices and social capital (Levitt 2001, 59–63)<sup>9</sup> in the foreign society, and how they transmit and spread them back to their origin society. This section outlines different facets of the social remittances concept, explains some problems with using it as an analytical lens and suggests some solutions.

Most social remittances research, like most sending country research, is not about remitting within Europe. The term was coined by Levitt with reference to the Dominican Republic and the United States, and her subsequent research has also been conducted outside Europe (e.g. Holdaway et al. 2015). Other recent publications on social remittances refer, for example, to Norway and Pakistan (Borchgrevink and Erdal 2016) and the Netherlands and Thailand (Brown 2016).

Probably as a by-product of the literature's non-European, poor country to rich country focus, 'circulation', in the sense of remittances travelling from sending to receiving countries as well as the reverse, has not been much explored. Levitt (2001, 56) had noted that 'migrants make sense of their experiences using the interpretative frames they bring with them', but nonetheless she was criticised for the book's greater emphasis on influences flowing from the United States, rather than vice versa. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves emphasise that circulation takes place, in the sense that Dominican villagers already have cultural repertoires which they may refine and develop while they are in Boston (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). Vianello (2013, 92) makes a similar point about Ukraine: 'Social remittances should not be viewed as a cultural colonization, because they are developed – and not passively learned – by migrants through their work experiences, their life events and the interaction with different cultures.' Gawlewicz (2015b) uses 'circulation' to describe how stayers contest arguments raised by migrants, though such counter-influences would be described by Grabowska, Garapich, et al. (2017) as 'blocking' social remittances. However, such discussion still leaves unexplored the matter of how sending country stayers might be able through migrants to transmit ideas to majority populations in the receiving societies (as touched upon by White in her examples of circulation as reciprocal remitting in chapters 7 and 8 of our book). Moreover, it needs to be emphasised that 'multidirectional flows', a term used by Grabowska in chapter 4, is often better than 'circulation', given that many transnational fields link three or more countries.

Although Levitt has elaborated on the concept of social remittances in more recent writings, her main ideas are set out in *The Transnational Villagers* (2001), presenting her ethnographic fieldwork in Boca Canasta and Boston. Her focus is on the community and the shared 'dual membership' that consolidates a certain solidarity among its inhabitants. The villagers are described as community minded, subject to social sanctions if they do not act for the common good and reliant on money earned in Boston to enact community projects. In her 2011 article with Lamba-Nieves, Levitt deepened her analysis of collective<sup>10</sup> remittances. Collective remittances are harder to identify in contemporary Poland. By contrast to their equivalents in the Americas, Polish sending locations in the post-EU accession period usually do not pair up with specific destinations abroad. Neighbours in a Polish village frequently have geographically disparate networks. Moreover, migrants focus on bettering themselves and their families, rather than on clubbing together to fund community projects. Community projects are often subsidised by the EU.

Although Levitt's understanding of social remittances is quite broad, embracing ideas, practices and social capital, it is also specific. She asserts that, like economic remittances, social remittances are directly transmitted from one person to another. 'Migrants and nonmigrants can state how they learned of a specific idea or practice and why they decided to adopt it' (Levitt 2001, 63). De Haas (2010, 1595), by contrast, equates social remittances with the broader phenomenon of 'migration-driven forms of cultural change', particularly the propensity of migration to breed migration (see above). Boccagni and Decimo, introducing their *Migration Letters* special issue on social remittances, stretch the concept, referring to the 'myriad ways in which migrants affect their home societies' (2013, 1) and to 'the "suitcase" of immaterial goods brought back by migrants to home societies' (4). These include *indirect* consequences of economic remittances, such as 'patterns of social stratification' (5). In fact, as they point out, it is hard analytically to separate economic from social remittances, since the act of sending money always has a social context. For instance, Vianello (2013, 92), writing about Ukrainians, argues that, 'as many studies have shown, the act of remitting money is often represented by migrant women as a symbol of love and faithfulness towards their families left behind'. Boccagni and Decimo further point out (2013, 4) that direct social remittances also travel from migrant milieux as well as from the majority population of the receiving society.

This latter point seems particularly relevant in the case of political remittances, a subset of 'social' ones. Although the topic of émigré involvement in homeland politics is hardly new, there has been an upsurge of interest in links between migration and democratisation (Ahmadov and Sasse 2016, 2; Beichelt and Worschech 2017; Vargas-Silva 2013, 2–3). Careja and Emmenegger (2012, 875), for example, argue on the basis of 2002 data that CEE migrants are more likely than stayers to trust EU institutions and to try to convince friends in political discussions. Finally, most scholars, starting with Levitt herself, seem to agree that it is impossible to disentangle the social and the cultural. For example, Bobova (2016, 120), writing about Belarus, uses the term 'socio-cultural remittances' to 'denote all non-material assets imported by migrants to their home societies'.

Despite such conceptual widening, social remittances on the ground can be hard to research unless defined more narrowly. Sandu (2010), in a quantitative study of outcomes in Romania, refers to 'attitudes and resources'. *Migrants as Agents of Change*, by Grabowska, Garapich, et al. (2017), is the most thorough attempt to date to develop and operationalise the concept. Grabowska and her co-authors focus on ideas, skills, practices



and objects, but – unlike Levitt – do not include social capital per se. (However, they do consider social networks after return.) As the title suggests, the book focuses mostly on individual agency and on actual remitting; in particular, the authors examine each stage of the process, through ‘acquisition’ and ‘transfer’ to ‘diffusion’ (adaptation and implementation).

Social remitting is much harder than economic remitting to conceptualise. A migrant, living abroad, acquires money and either spends it on the spot, or saves it, or sends/brings it home to the country of origin. In the origin country, it is possible to track how economic remittances are spent. However, it is too simple to see social remittances as things that can be carried home in a suitcase and unpacked at the end of the journey. Anyone can send money, but social remittances depend on the size and quality of individuals’ transnational networks (see especially [Krzyżowski 2016](#)), and on a complex interplay of structure and agency. They are therefore very individualised.

The process begins when migrants pick up new ideas, attitudes and behaviour in the receiving society. This can be captured in (rare) opinion surveys among migrants (see, e.g. [Goodwin, Polek and Bardi 2012](#); [Mole et al. 2017](#)). Acquisition is both the easiest stage of social remitting to document and also one that, in broad terms, often seems similar across different migrant groups. Interviewees mention in particular becoming more open and confident. In a typical observation, Bobova (2016, 123), writing about 43 highly skilled Belarusians, notes that ‘many informants repeatedly acknowledged that while abroad they became both more self-confident and more tolerant’. More specifically, the first shock of exposure to multi-ethnic societies is often mentioned in the literature. For example, Nedelcu (2012, 1350) quotes a grandmother visiting from Romania: ‘When I took the subway in Toronto for the first time I felt as though I was at a United Nations meeting . . . I really had a shock. I couldn’t have imagined what a “multicultural society” meant.’ Another area of special interest to scholars is gender roles, and, although there is evidence both ways for whether migration brings greater gender equality, a number of scholars writing about CEE comment on how attitudes to gender roles and relations can indeed change abroad. Vlase (2013, 86) quotes Mioara, a Romanian mother:

I know from my own experience that when we first went to Italy, my husband and I were both old fashioned. Once we arrived there, we saw how others lived and tried somewhat to adjust. Before that, my husband used to think that he could just make a mess, throwing towels or other things around the house, because it was my duty to clean.

In many other cases, which Levitt would not classify as social remittances, but which Boccagni and Decimo would, gender roles change for practical reasons and not necessarily thanks to recognition that it would be fairer to share roles. Szczygielska (2013, 185), for example, describes how wives' migration becomes a 'forced lesson in housekeeping' for husbands left in Poland. Migrants can also fail to change their ways. For instance, Litina, Moroconi and Zanaj 2016 (using World Values Survey data) assert that migrants living abroad tend not to pick up the environmental culture predominant in the receiving society.

There is a vast sociological and psychological literature on migrant integration and acculturation, of which such studies could be considered a part. Oddly enough, the overlap between the integration and social remittances literature is rarely acknowledged in the scholarship. Scholars of integration are interested in the migrant's behaviour vis-à-vis receiving society expectations, while scholars of social remittances examine the migrant vis-à-vis the origin society. There is no reason why social remittances scholars should keep off integration territory, although some might argue that new ideas and behaviour should only be classed as 'remittances' once they are actually transferred to sending country contacts. In other words, they become remittances not when they are acquired but only when remitted. This happens when the migrant picks up the phone to tell family and friends about the new idea, or has a conversation on a visit back to the origin country, or after s/he returns to live there. Until then, the new idea is simply a *potential* remittance (Karolak 2016, 22).

However, the integration literature can be used if we employ the concept of 'society abroad' and accept that social change to, for example, Polish or Romanian society starts as soon as a Pole or Romanian abroad adopts new ideas and practices. Every Romanian husband in Italy, for example, can be viewed as still a member of Romanian society; Mioara's husband's conversion adds to the sum of Romanian men who believe that men should participate in household labour. Hence this is a social remittance, since it changes Romanian society, at least Romanian society abroad. We have to forget the suitcase metaphor if we want to understand social remittances in this fashion, since no 'remitting' has so far been done between individuals.

As the receiving country scholarship on how migrants integrate illustrates, individuals integrate differently, and this has an impact on how much they are able and willing to remit. Levitt (2001, 57) distinguishes between 'recipient observers', who spend their time abroad mostly with co-ethnics, change little themselves, but nonetheless passively imitate aspects of the receiving society; 'instrumental adopters', who are more

integrated, and change their ways for pragmatic reasons; and ‘purposeful innovators’, who ‘want to learn and benefit from the new world around them’ and deliberately develop ideas and practices seen abroad. In [chapter 4](#), Grabowska considers in more theoretical and empirical detail than Levitt the distinctions between imitation and innovation, which is equally relevant to the initial ‘acquisition’ and the following phase, as migrants transfer ideas to stayers. A period of reflection is clearly important in the process, and Kubal (2015, 76), writing about Ukraine, makes the point that such reflection is often triggered only once the migrant returns to the country of origin and begins to make comparisons. Grabowska (2016), writing about Poland, and Blum (2015), writing about young Kazakhs returning from the United States, separately build on the work of Margaret Archer to identify why certain returnees, depending on how they reflect on their migration experience, are more likely than others to become agents of change.

Also significant to both acquisition and transfer are the more influential nature of face-to-face than mediated contact ([Grabowska and Garpich 2016](#), 2155); the charisma of the remitters; the social positions they occupy; and whether they have an audience. Gawlewicz (2015b, 2226–7) offers examples of how migrants’ interpretations are trusted by their friends and family back in Poland: they appeared to believe that migrants were the source of the most accurate or ‘proven’ pieces of information about a receiving society simply because they lived there.

The family, as the key site for socialisation, is particularly important for social remitting. For example, Vlase (2013, 87) argues that when Romanian women return to Romania, having gained confidence abroad, they encourage their daughters to train for professional careers, such as law and law enforcement, not traditionally adopted by women. Nedelcu (2012, 1350) quotes a Romanian interviewee: ‘I finally understood [from my son’s communications] that being Canadian means learning to live together, to accept the differences, values and inputs of each individual. This really changed my perception of things; today I’m no longer surprised to see Chinese or Turkish people coming to my country . . . or rather, it doesn’t annoy me anymore (Architect, male, 66).’

Nedelcu’s example, as described, seems to be a rather direct case of values transfer, but she also points out that this is not so simple and has multiple dimensions. As she observes (2012, 1351), ‘these “social remittances” . . . have complex consequences. They allow non-migrants not only to learn about Canada or Canadians, but also to open up to cultural difference and absorb a different mode of communication about and with

the Other.’ In the case of social remittances, what goes into the suitcase probably rarely comes out unchanged. In Nedelcu’s example, it is something much larger. It can also mutate, since it is applied in a particular context in the sending country. For example, Nagy (2009, 10), writing that small Romanian rural hotels incorporate comforts that members of the family working abroad have seen in the West, suggests that ‘they help impose foreign models but often with a double translation, linked to diverse local reinterpretations’.

The authors of OECD 2017 (253) further suggest that returnees’ influence depends partly on ‘the size of the return migrant community in a given locality’, raising the question, addressed in our book, of where specifically remittances can be transmitted and diffused. Once again, there should be overlap with receiving society scholarship, since contact zones are usually the object of receiving society research, particularly regarding contact theory, cosmopolitanism and conviviality. Opportunity structures vary in different locations and social spaces. Nevinskaitė (2016, 136, 138), writing about Lithuania, suggests that ‘social remittances from the highly skilled depend on a favourable context for knowledge and skills transfer in their home countries, which can be summarised by the term “country receptivity”’. This is defined as ‘the willingness and the ability of a country to accept and assimilate knowledge and skills contributions from its diaspora’. However, for non-elite social remitters, receptivity at the local level is more important. Power relationships are central in social remitting (Boccagni and Decimo 2013), and equality of status can be a precondition for people becoming more accepting of each other’s cultural practices and identities (see Fonseca and McGarrigle 2012, 10, on receiving locations). Hence receptivity is most likely to exist when sending and receiving locations are felt to be equal, both with something to give and accept. Grabowska, Garapich, et al. (2017, 211) refer to the ‘rule of reciprocity’. Kubal (2015, 83) describes how Ukrainians who acquired more law-abiding habits while living in countries such as Norway and the Netherlands pragmatically made only small, acceptable adjustments to their behaviour on return: they drive more safely or avoid dropping litter, but they cannot have an impact on big problems with legal culture such as corruption.

In practice, partly because of defensiveness, many attempts at remitting are resisted (Garapich 2016b), and often there is a time lag before they can be enacted (Grabowska et al. 2017a, 213–4). Dziegielewski (2016) suggests that the fundamental obstacle is a lack of trust in Polish society, which makes people reluctant to adopt novel practices. In respect to

levels of trust, Poland is similar to other countries in CEE. The recent resurgence of social conservatism, with its backlash against ‘gender ideology’ and multiculturalism, in some countries of the region also creates an unfavourable climate for some types of social remitting.

The final stage of social remitting is the diffusion of ideas and practices from stayers to other stayers and eventually, perhaps, to wider society. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves conclude their article by asking the question: ‘When does local-level change in something like gender relations, for example, scale up to produce broader shifts in reproductive behaviour and labour market participation?’ (2011, 19). To some extent it is possible to track the first stages of this process. By interviewing stayers in the local communities they studied, Grabowska, Garapich, et al. found examples of ‘spillovers’, showing how ‘even transmitting to a small group of people can gradually spread to larger circles’ (2017, 6). White (2017) illustrates how stayers pass on new norms about how to migrate, such as that it is better for whole families to relocate abroad, rather than one parent migrating while leaving family members in Poland, with associated emotional costs. Such new beliefs spread easily in places with high volumes of migration, where other people’s migration experiences are frequent topics of conversation among stayers. It might be possible to track transmission quite precisely if the transmitter broadcasts their newly acquired convictions to a broad audience, for example via social media, and this is relayed further. Overall, however, it is hardly possible to track social remittances in the same way as economic remittances. In fact, this worry is misplaced, because it is pointless to expect social remittances on their own to achieve social change. A necessary precondition for scaling up is receptivity, discussed above. ‘Migration tends to reinforce (pre-)existing trends’ (De Haas 2012, 19), and social remittances will travel further if society is already developing in the same direction.

## **6. Conclusion: The rationale for adopting an inside-out approach**

As already argued, it is more realistic and useful to start one’s analysis of migration impact by identifying significant aspects of social change in a given country and then investigating how social remittances intertwine with other influences to effect this change, among different sections of society and in different locations. In most respects there is no ‘average Pole’ or ‘typical household’, so a fine-grained analysis is needed, taking

into account the different tendencies among different social groups, and the different types of migration that characterise different people and places.

There are rare hints of such an approach in the migration literature, in the sense that migration is understood to be somehow contributing to and combining with other causes of social change. For example, Markova (2010a, 3) remarks:

An interesting phenomenon has been observed in Albania – a proportion of the female working population has withdrawn from the labour market. There are various explanations for this: one factor certainly is the return to traditional family values, according to which women are responsible for domestic work and men are those earning money outside the household. Another explanation relates to the increased dependency on money sent home by emigrant husbands.

However, Markova does not develop this thought, and it remains unclear how, if at all, these factors interrelate. Blum (2015, 4) provides a more sustained analysis; he argues that understanding the ‘social, cultural, and institutional context is essential in order to appreciate the issues at stake in enacting various nontraditional practices drawn from abroad’. In his discussion of a sample of young Kazakh returnees, Blum prefaces his analysis of each type of remittance – from ideas about gender equality to attitudes towards sitting on the ground – with comments about related areas of ongoing social change in Kazakhstan. This makes his book the closest in approach to our own, as far as we are aware. However, most of the information on trends is not backed up with statistical evidence; instead, Blum tends to make assertions based on his extensive first-hand knowledge of Kazakh society. More importantly, Blum does not attempt to explain precisely how social remittances relate to types of change already occurring for other reasons (and uses the vaguer term ‘hybridisation’ in preference to ‘social remittances’).

A handful of other scholars, mostly writing on a rather abstract level, also note the coexistence of change driven by migration and change driven by other factors, making the point that they are hard to disentangle. As Faist (2016, 331) points out, ‘In general, it is difficult to clearly pinpoint the impact of cross-border mobility, given the overall matrix of change and transformation produced by globalization.’ Boccagni and Decimo (2013, 2) similarly mention that ‘distinguishing migrants’ specific influence, within the wealth of material and symbolic resources that circulate between and within nation-states, may be quite a hazardous task’.

Levitt and De Haas both suggest the reciprocal nature of migration and non-migration influences, though Levitt appears to attribute slightly greater weight to migration. Citing the example of CNN's impact in the Dominican Republic, Levitt writes that 'global cultural flows also heighten[s] remittance impact' (2001, 68) and Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2011, 3) argue that social remittances 'are distinct from, but often reinforce and are reinforced by, other forms of global cultural circulation'. De Haas suggests:

It is important to recognize that migration itself is [a] constituent part of a complex set of radical social, cultural and economic transformations that have affected Morocco, as well as an independent factor in perpetuating and probably intensifying, magnifying and accelerating these processes at the local and regional levels. Migration is not only a factor explaining change, but also an integral part of change itself to the same degree as it may reciprocally enable further change. Other processes, such as improved education, increasing exposure to electronic media, improved infrastructure and tourism[,] also play a key role in opening people's eyes to the wider world and helping to raise aspirations. (2007, 32)

Looking at the matter 'inside-out' helps disentangle such processes of change. Collecting as much information as possible about each individual social trend and its different possible explanations should enable the researcher to form an impression of how different factors interrelate. For example, Poles today seem somewhat readier than before 2004 to believe that 'most people can be trusted'. A simple social remittances approach might suggest that some migrants acquire more trusting attitudes as a result of migration to trusting countries such as Denmark and Norway. Individuals may then behave in a more trusting way after they return. However, this is definitely not the whole picture. Trust is commonly associated with levels of prosperity and education, both of which have been rising in Poland and can help account for the Polish trend. Since migration money is part of that prosperity, this is a (second-order) migration influence. Trust is also a cultural matter. Generalised trust is still low in smaller towns and villages, from which many Poles migrate, suggesting the need to consider how local migration cultures may help to suppress the effect of other factors that might promote rising trust. In fact, many stories circulate about agencies who cheat would-be migrants and about Poles abroad who let down other Poles, so in this case it seems the migration influence might be rather strong. Finally, it is important

to notice when individual people behave in unexpected ways as a result of migration. For example, interviews with return migrants to small towns can reveal that trust is important to them and that they do like living in more trusting societies. The influence of migration can be seen as particularly important when the migration experience itself was necessary to convert the individual to such a viewpoint.

## Notes

- 1 Migration scholars are active both in Romania and abroad. The Romanian Network for Migration Studies (RoMig) was founded in 2016. For English-language sources on Poland, see the publication lists at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/people/anne-white/ssees/research/polish-migration>.
- 2 Albania has the most migration in Europe. One third of the population now lives abroad, according to King et al. (2014, 30), a much higher proportion than in Poland.
- 3 Orozco and Rouse (2007), in their otherwise wide-ranging review of HTAs, seem to assume that HTAs would not operate in European sending countries. They do not comment on Europe at all. Fiń et al. (2013, 81) recommend the creation of HTAs in Poland, implying there are none.
- 4 Writing about Lithuania, Nevinskaitė (2016) argues that the shift in policy from encouraging migrants to return to harnessing diaspora potential occurred after the 2008 crisis.
- 5 In the case of Romania and Poland, it did accelerate some returns that would otherwise have occurred somewhat later (Barcevičius et al. 2012).
- 6 The socio-demographic profile of return migrants varies from country to country. The authors of OECD (2017, 252) observe: 'In Armenia and Costa Rica, highly educated people are more likely to come back compared to those with a lower level of education, while it is the opposite in Burkina Faso, Cambodia, the Dominican Republic and the Philippines'. However, they agree that, overall, the best qualified people are the least likely to return.
- 7 According to Nevinskaitė (2016, 148–9), 'Almost 40 per cent of Lithuanians abroad perceive a negative attitude from Lithuanians in Lithuania towards emigrants . . . 8 out of 10 employers claimed they would prefer an employee without emigration experience over one with such experience.'
- 8 Up to and including the fourth, 2009, edition. The 5th (2014) edition is slightly different, because de Haas joined the authorial team.
- 9 Levitt categorises social remittances slightly differently in different publications.
- 10 Goldring (2004, 808) writes that this term became common in the early 1990s. 'It describes money raised by a group that is used to benefit a group or community with which it is affiliated.'



## 4

# Social remittances

## *Channels of diffusion*

IZABELA GRABOWSKA

### 1. Introduction

Although the later chapters in this book present different aspects of change in Poland, before analysing how migration contributes to change, this chapter has a different role and design. Its main purpose is to explain, in more detail than is possible elsewhere, how the actual process of social remitting takes place, which kinds of social remittances are particularly likely to become diffused in Poland, and why. In particular, it addresses the question of why some migrants become ‘agents of change’ (Grabowska, Garapich, et al. 2017). Although the book does not, as a whole, attempt to answer the quantitative question of how much migration contributes to social change, this chapter does also provide a partial answer to that question, with regard to the acquisition of transferable skills. It has a strong focus on practices – not just looking at what migrants admire when they are abroad, but at how they change and what they actually do when they return to their country of origin. In particular, I show that rather than simply lamenting the fact that many Poles abroad work in jobs for which they are overqualified, we need also to be aware that, as proved by survey evidence, they acquire important social skills which they can use on their return to Poland.

Chapter 3 argued that social remittances were the most helpful conceptual tool for connecting migration and social change, and this chapter backs up that claim with empirical evidence based on the Polish case. As discussed in chapter 3, the concept of social remittances generally refers to non-economic impacts on the sending society: ‘the ideas, behav-

iors, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving to sending country communities' (Levitt 1998, 927) or, as defined by Sandu (2010), resources, predominately non-material, and attitudes. Non-material resources include also transferable types of human capital (i.e. knowledge, skills and competences). Material culture can be defined as a social remittance when artefacts gain social meaning.

This chapter argues that social remittances are a potentially transformative and 'stabilising' element in social change. In other words, they can help to consolidate change which is already taking place for other reasons. They are facilitated by forces of globalisation, including ease of travel and communication, especially in the EU (King and Lulle 2016, 104). They themselves are also part of global cultural diffusion. Social remittances are a useful lens through which to observe processes of social change occurring in different societies simultaneously. A migrant who is a potential carrier of social remittances 'leaves a society in motion and comes to a society in motion . . . also increasingly inhabit[ing] transnational spaces' (Haynes and Galasińska 2016, 46).

As discussed in more detail in Grabowska and Engbersen (2016), social remittances had been explored in Polish migration scholarship before the term was invented. Migration since 2004 may be compared in scale with the flow of Poles to the United States from 1880 to 1910, when approximately two million migrated (Zaretsky 1984, 2). Then, too, migrants attempted to maintain ties with stayers in Poland, as documented through the correspondence collected by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918–20, 1984). Duda-Dziewierz (1938), in her monograph about the village of Babica in Małopolska region, demonstrated that new ideas were transferred back to Poland, contesting old and creating new normative structures, through letters, newspapers, books and pamphlets sent from the United States, as well as through direct contacts with visitors and, even more significantly, return migrants. Krzywicki (1891), analysing another historically significant strand of Polish labour migration, shows how circular migration by female migrants to Prussia created efficient channels of diffusion which led to change in households in Poland. With the advent of electronic communications in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the 'forms, intensity, immediacy and frequency of contacts' between migrants and non-migrants have changed and have facilitated the maintenance of closer relations and bonds, on a near daily basis (Haynes and Galasińska 2016, 51). This also gives rise to new channels of diffusion for social remittances.

The main aims of this chapter are (1) to show that social remittances can affect various domains of social life such as labour markets, workplaces,

local communities and neighbourhoods, family and peers; and (2) to identify channels of diffusion, including human transmitters of social remittances to Poland and within Poland.

Social remittances are mainly researched using qualitative methods. King and Lulle (2016, 104) refer to them as a 'qualitative approach to development'. As mentioned in [chapter 3](#), they are difficult to measure and quantify. Nonetheless, this chapter uses quantitative as well as qualitative approaches, and this is one of its key contributions to the social remittances literature.

The rest of this chapter is composed of five parts. Section 2, a conceptual section, outlines the logic of the social remitting process. Section 3, a methodological section, introduces data sources and domains of social remitting. Section 4 analyses social remittances related to skills and workplace relations. Section 5 analyses social remittances related to local community and neighbourhood. Finally, in Section 6, I consider why some return migrants successfully become agents of change, with pen portraits of individuals (new for this book, and different from the studies presented in [Grabowska, Garapich, et al. 2017](#)).

## 2. Conceptual overview and framework of analysis

Migration from Poland is to some extent a response to patterns of system transformation starting in 1989 that marginalised sections of society. These included many residents of small towns and villages, such as those studied in the various ethno-surveys of migrant and non-migrant households conducted by the University of Warsaw Centre of Migration Research (CMR; see, e.g. [Jaźwińska and Okólski 2001](#)). More recently, my co-authored book *Migrants as Agents of Change* ([Grabowska et al. 2017](#)) discussed the small towns of Pszczyna in Silesia region, Sokółka in Podlasie region and Trzebnica in Lower Silesia region. In such towns, ongoing, post-transformation change occurs at different speeds in different parts of the social space, including in local institutions such as schools, sports clubs, courts and hospitals, partly in their role as workplaces. Amin (2002) refers to such domains as 'micropublics'. Change also occurs in more private spaces, such as within family and peer groups. Social remittances contribute to and intersect with these different strands of change. For example, a notable feature of many towns is recent improvements in infrastructure with the aid of EU funding. However, migrants also make improvements to their homes and gardens, which change the appearance of the town. Overall, if life is becoming more comfortable, better organised

**Table 4.1** Conceptual model of [chapter 4](#)

<b>SOCIAL REMITTANCES:</b>	
Norms, values, practices, social capital ( <a href="#">Levitt 1998</a> )	<b>Multidirectional PROCESS of social remitting with human agency at the forefront</b> ( <a href="#">Grabowska, Garapich, et al. 2017</a> ):  (1) Encountering/acquiring (2) Transmitting/transferring (3) Implementing/applying (4) Spilling-over/diffusing Every stage of social remitting might also involve social <b>RESISTANCE</b>  <b>DOMAINS of social remittances:</b> (1) Workplaces and other locations where work-related skills (human capital) can be acquired (2) Local community institutions such as health centres, schools, sports centres and neighbourhoods (3) Family and peers  <b>Everyday SPACES of social remitting:</b> (1) Public spaces (micropublics): workplaces, schools, colleges, youth centres, sports clubs and other spaces of association and everyday encounter (2) Private spaces: family, peers and other friends
Attitudes & resources ( <a href="#">Sandu 2010</a> )	
Ideas & practices ( <a href="#">Grabowska &amp; Garapich 2016</a> )	
Social skills ( <a href="#">Grabowska 2017</a> )	

Source: Own elaboration.

and interesting for many Poles, this is for a variety of reasons. Rather than separating migration from other social, cultural, political and economic factors, it is important to show its complementary function.

The model sketched out in [table 4.1](#) rests on the definition of social remittances coined by Levitt (1998) but also includes the wider approach that migrants bring back both attitudes and resources ([Sandu 2010](#)). In Grabowska, Garapich, et al. (2017) we put human agency at the forefront of every stage of this process. Like Levitt, we focused often on intentional transmission by individual migrants. Agency is, however, intertwined with

the opportunity structures that can both enable and constrain acquisition, transfer and implementation of social remittances in Poland.

The stages of social remitting were discussed in [chapter 3](#) and are outlined in [table 4.1](#), but it is worth noting some additional details. Acquiring social remittances involves both simple imitation and also innovation, where social remitters modify activities and practices and translate them to local conditions. There is often also a process of evaluation and reflexivity, when migrants critically assess ideas, decisions, activities, practices and actions undertaken both at destination and origin locations. With regard to the transmission process, Levitt highlights that social remittances often travel together in packages, and that ‘if many remittances are transmitted consistently during a short time, their impact is greater than when they are transferred periodically’ (2001, 69).

Particularly important for this chapter is the implementation of social remittances: the outcomes of transfer. Levitt (2001, 64–9) enumerates five determinants of impact of social remittances: (1) the nature of the remittance itself (easy or complicated to transfer); (2) the nature of the transnational system, particularly social networks and community practices: ‘remittances flow more efficiently through tightly connected, dense systems’; (3) the characteristics of the messenger (whether they are seen as worthy of emulation); (4) the target audience (their gender, class, life stage); and (5) the relative differences between sending and receiving countries.

### 3. Data sources and domains of social remittances

The three main sources for this chapter are set out in [table 4.2](#). The first, the Human Capital in Poland data set, is an exceptionally large study, which ‘made it possible to keep track of the situation on the Polish labour market, monitor supply and demand for competencies as well as the system of education and trainings market in Poland in the years 2010–2015’.<sup>1</sup> Because this is a large data set, including both former migrants and stayers, it is suitable for calculating whether migration has any impact on skills and competencies as comparing Poles who have never migrated.

The project Occupational Careers of Post-Accession Migrants formed the basis for Grabowska-Lusińska (2012) and the revised, expanded version in English, *Movers and Stayers: Social Mobility, Migration and Skills* (Grabowska 2016). This project combined quantitative analysis of data on labour market sequences for migrants and non-migrants participating in ethno-surveys conducted by CMR, with in-depth biographical inter-

**Table 4.2** Data sources for [chapter 4](#)

Name of the data source	Period	Methodology
<i>Human Capital in Poland</i> [Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego, BKL]	2010–16	Representative survey for various labour market groups and topics; n (worked abroad) = 4,040; n (not worked abroad) = 67,163.
<i>Occupational careers of post-accession migrants</i> (grant funded by Ministry of Higher Education in Poland)	2009–11	Secondary analysis of ethno- surveys of Centre of Migration Research 1996–2007 (household survey in selected local communi- ties); n (migrants) = 400; n (non-migrants) = 1,200.  Biographical study of occupational careers of post-accession (return) migrants to Poland; n = 18.
<i>Cultural diffusion through social remittances between Poland and UK</i> (grant funded by National Science Centre, Harmonia Programme)	2012–15	Transnational Multisited Qualitative Longitudinal Study: three local communities with transnational links in the UK; n = 124 individuals (121 in-depth interviews).

Source: Own elaboration

views of 18 return migrants. Finally, Cultural Diffusion through Social Remittances between Poland and UK was a large qualitative project conducted by myself with Michał Garapich, Ewa Jaźwińska and Agnieszka Radziwinowiczówna. We interviewed residents of three Polish towns, as well as their contacts in the United Kingdom, adopting the sociological practice of adaptive theory formation suggested by Layder (1998), with no preconceptions about the nature of social remittances which might be discovered. This enabled us to avoid the conventional cost-benefit framing of migration impacts and to discover the small, otherwise invisible changes actually happening in the lives of individual Poles and their direct milieux. The findings of this project, whose methodology is described in detail in Grabowska and Garapich (2016) and Grabowska, Garapich, et al. (2017), constitute the main source for this chapter.

The data derived from the sources presented in [table 4.2](#) provide the opportunity to study social remittances in various domains of social life (see also [table 4.1](#)) and their channels of diffusion. Three general domains are distinguished: workplaces, providing social remittances in the form

of skills and new ideas about working practices and conditions; local communities and neighbourhoods; and family, peers and friendship groups. In each domain it is possible to identify specific types of social remitting, which relate to both attitudes and resources. In each domain, some remittances relate specifically to that domain (e.g. specific work or parenting practices), but others are simply acquired and transferred within that domain (e.g. ideas about race or religion). It is important to note that the three domains are not exclusive, but intersect. They have been distinguished from one another here to enhance the clarity of argument.

The family domain is not addressed in detail in this chapter, since it is covered in Krystyna Slany's chapter in this volume ([chapter 6](#)). It is worth noting that, for social remitting to happen between family members and friends, both stayers and migrants need to be active in this process, although these transmissions sometimes favour migrants, as they are felt to 'know better' with their 'experience of the world'. In the domain of family and peers, social remittances uncovered in the Cultural Diffusion project related mostly to the transfers of attitudes towards diversity, practices of everyday family logistics, practices of raising children, division of household labour, and gender roles and those relating to family rituals and ceremonies. Everyday logistics overlap with relations with children (teaching children to perform household tasks and developing children's independence), relations with children overlap with gender roles (conscious parenting), gender roles overlap with everyday logistics (division of household labour in a household). As a result, the process of 'doing family' is revealed to be a multi-layered process of social remitting ([Buler, Sarnowska and Grabowska 2016](#)). Peer groups are insufficiently researched in social remittances scholarship, although they are the focus of my current research project (for preliminary results, see [Grabowska, Pustułka, et al. 2017](#)).<sup>2</sup>

Migrants' immediate family and close circle of friends are important because they are the initial recipients of the social remittances migrants bring from abroad. However, this is a relatively narrow audience. Workplaces in Poland offer much greater opportunity for diffusion, particularly if they allow potential diffusers to have contact with a broad range of people. Moreover, workplaces are especially important sites for acquiring social remittances in the receiving country. Bearing in mind that post-accession migrants from Poland went and still go abroad predominately for work and spend the majority of their time in workplaces, personal contact with other people at work seems to be the most important channel for diffusion.

## 4. Domain 1: The workplace as a domain for acquiring and transferring human capital and work practices

This domain is designated broadly in order to embrace various aspects of social remittances in the area of work and employment. This section discusses: (1) social skills as one of the key aspects of human capital, and the impact of migration on their acquisition, validation and transfer, including transfer to the non-migrant population in Poland; (2) the entrepreneurship of return migrants as both an attitude and a socio-economic activity; and (3) workplaces, both at destination and after return, considered as micropublics where attitudes are (re)formed and social skills acquired, validated and transferred. The aspects discussed in this section intersect at every stage of the process of social remitting. Although return migrants often complain about unchanging workplaces in Poland, the point of this section is not, of course, to argue that migration is the only factor leading to changes in the Polish workplace.

### 4.1 Social skills

Social skills, a rather elusive concept, are difficult to grasp in the data. They can be operationalised, however, as knowing how to do certain things, in specific settings, and can be treated either as attributes of social remittances or as social remittances themselves (Grabowska 2017). For the purpose of quantitative analysis, social skills are usually divided into two groups: sociocultural, context-specific social skills, which are difficult to transfer between different cultural settings, and transferable skills, which are more universal and can be acquired and transferred between settings. Transferable skills include cognitive skills, self-management and discipline, interpersonal (communication) skills, and work organisation skills, including capacity for teamwork. In qualitative research, social skills are analysed in more interpretative terms, to achieve insights into the context and how they are acquired, enhanced, validated and transferred. Even workplaces where low-skilled work takes place are spaces for acquiring social skills (Williams and Baláž 2005). People learn in formal situations but above all in informal ones, by observing, communicating and doing things together (Grabowska 2017).

The qualitative studies by Klagge and Klein-Hitpass (2010) and Klein-Hitpass (2016) on Polish society in the early 2000s showed that return migrants were endowed with (tacit) skills not present in the Polish workforce. This might have changed, however, with the accession of Poland



to the EU, with new educational methods, and the inflow of foreign direct investments to Poland (Karolak 2016). Some more recent data is considered next.

Survey data derived from the Human Capital in Poland study (2010–14)<sup>3</sup> offers a unique opportunity to identify social skills in both migrant and non-migrant populations. From the whole range of competencies measured in the survey, we took four categories of transferable skills: (1) cognitive skills (information searching, analysing and drawing conclusions); (2) organisation of one's own work, taking the initiative and being on time; (3) interpersonal (communication) skills; and (4) managerial abilities and work organisation skills. A model of linear regression calculation (table 4.3) shows that, based on the predictor variables, one can estimate 29 per cent of variance in social skills in the population of Poland. This model is better than a median for predicting the result of a dependent variable [ $F(9.71092)=3248.42$ ;  $p<0.001$ ]. The highest level of social skills was possessed by five categories of people: (1) those who had

**Table 4.3** Linear regression for social skills and relations with work abroad

	Model: Social Skills	
	B	SE
Constant	3.259***	
Sex (ref = men)		
women	−0.008	0.005
Education (ref = low)		
medium	0.504***	0.006
high	0.917***	0.007
Age (ref = < 44)		
>45	−0.172***	0.005
Place of residence (ref = city)		
village	−0.158***	0.005
Labour market situation (ref = employed)		
unemployed	−0.166***	0.009
inactive	−0.202***	0.007
Self-employed (ref = no)		
yes	0.168***	0.008
Work abroad (ref = no)		
yes	0.090**	0.011
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.291	

\*\*\*  $p<0.001$ , \*\*  $p<0.01$

Source: Grabowska and Jastrzębowska (2017)

engaged at some time in their lives in international migration; (2) those with higher or secondary education; (3) those who lived in cities; (4) those who were aged 19–44 (the age of greatest mobility); and (5) those who were employed or who owned their own businesses (Grabowska and Jastrzębowska, 2017).

Grabowska and Jastrzębowska (2017) also conducted cluster analysis that showed that the population (including both return migrants and stayers) could be classed within four groups: (1) stayers with low social skills; (2) stayers with high social skills; (3) movers with low social skills; and (4) movers with high social skills. ‘Movers with high social skills’ was the most significant group. Compared with the other groups, they had the highest rate of self-employment (more than 20 per cent), the highest level of participating in training courses (nearly 28 per cent) and the highest level of enthusiasm for lifelong learning. They ‘want to educate themselves further’ (nearly 37 per cent), but they have also the lowest educational match with ‘the actual work performed’ (nearly 60 per cent). The last point can of course be interpreted as a kind of labour market penalty for working abroad below their formal qualifications. However, taking into consideration their self-employment and lifelong learning attitudes and activities, migration-related social skills can be regarded also as potential packages of social remittances (Grabowska 2017). This is discussed from a qualitative perspective below.

Regionally representative household surveys conducted by the Strategic Consulting Centre (CDS) in Kraków for three Polish regions with intense post-accession migration outflows (Małopolska, Silesia and Lower Silesia) also provide information about formal qualifications and social skills. Return migrants to Silesia, for example (n = 1000) reported that they learned foreign languages or improved language skills (90 per cent), became more confident in their own abilities (83 per cent), obtained work experience and qualifications (66 per cent) and learned new technical/technological know-how (64 per cent) (Gruszka, Majka and Szymańska 2012, 34). The study showed slightly higher percentages for female migrants, which is in line with the Occupational Careers of Post-Accession Migrants qualitative study, indicating that female migrants approach migration somewhat differently from men and are readier to learn from every new situation (Grabowska-Lusińska and Jaźwińska-Motyłska 2013).

My qualitative study (Grabowska 2016; 2017) based on 18 biographical interviews with return migrants, suggests that formation of social skills in migratory settings depends on several factors. First, seasonal migration, and work that does not match the formal education and

personal capabilities of the individual migrant, is not so likely to provide them with new social skills. Second, the degree of difference between origin and destination workplaces (Jarvis 2007) helps determine whether migrants acquire new skills. If workplaces are overwhelmingly different, the migrant may despair of learning from the new situation. On the other hand, there has to be enough difference for migrants to experience ‘aha moments’ of surprise and interest (Grabowska 2017). As discussed in Section 4.3, migrants also pick up new skills if they can communicate, relate to and do things with others in that setting, and actively use this relational structure of opportunities to learn (Donati and Archer 2015). The study revealed three categories of social skill: (1) communicating cross-culturally; (2) dealing with emotionally challenging work (e.g. jobs in the hospitality and care sector); and (3) taking the initiative and acting independently. These skills were reported by returnees to various localities in Poland (Grabowska 2017).

When migrants return to Poland, they have differing opportunities to put into practice skills acquired abroad and to spread knowledge about them. Workplace learning outcomes are both ‘hard’ qualifications, certified thanks to participation in professional training sessions, and ‘soft’ social skills acquired by observing, communicating and doing things together. The more transferable and universal the skills, the more they are applicable after return. For instance, in the case of hard qualifications, respondents obtained new construction qualifications relating to plastering. However, they were not able to use these qualifications in Poland because clients were not interested in this technique and did not want to pay for it (Grabowska 2016). Sometimes even the most obvious and transferable competences, such as English language, were difficult to transfer to Poland because workplaces are composed only of Poles and usually do not contact foreign counterparts on a daily basis. Return migrants were required during the recruitment procedure to have these competences, but on site they were not able to use them.

## 4.2 Entrepreneurship

Typically, and not only in Poland, return migrants aspire to become entrepreneurs. The process of self-identification as an entrepreneur and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is a type of social remittance. It is possible to measure rates of entrepreneurship in a population. For example, in the Human Capital in Poland study, 13 per cent of movers, compared to 11 per cent of stayers, ran their own business (confirmed also in Grabowska 2016). The differences are even higher when we take into account the

level of social skills mentioned in the previous section. In the survey on return migrants to Silesia (Gruszka, Majka and Szymańska 2012, 34), 23 per cent of return migrants reported that they brought an idea for their own business from abroad, although the 10 per cent gap between those wishing to set up a business and those who succeeded indicates, as discussed in chapter 3, the difficulties return migrants face in realising their aspirations. Moreover, ethnographic observation for the Cultural Diffusion project suggested that, even when returnees had set up businesses, these were usually small.

Entrepreneurship can be considered an attitude, a state of mind. In qualitative studies migrants reported that thanks to migration experience they were better able to take life into their own hands, to take risks and to act independently, and that they translated such behaviour to their own businesses. They found it difficult to follow Polish workplace rules after return because they considered that, as working people, they themselves had changed as a result of migration. Self-employment is in some cases a strategy to deal with the Polish labour market after return, to avoid Polish working conditions, which return migrants reported as finding inferior to those experienced abroad. Karolak (2016) points out, however, that one needs to distinguish between fictional self-employment of return migrants (accepting contracts that suit employers' desire for flexible labour) and genuine entrepreneurship. This latter, according to Karolak, gives more opportunities for transferring work-related social remittances, especially those connected to quality standards and health and safety provisions, as discussed in the following subsection.

### 4.3 Workplaces

Both destination and origin workplaces are important micropublics for acquiring and transmitting social remittances. All workplaces are constituted of both formal and informal components that create social spaces for social remittances (Haynes and Galasińska 2016). However, not all workplaces are equally suitable for social remitting. This is because social remittances are acquired and transferred by communicating and doing things with others (Grabowska, Garapich, et al. 2017). 'Relational workplaces' are built by people and for people and are apparently more social remittance-friendly than isolated workplaces such as, for instance, fish-freezing factories, where protective uniforms and the environment restrict people from communicating with and relating to each other (Grabowska 2017). Isolationist and exploitive workplaces may lead to social isolation and anomie, as discussed by Thomas and Znaniecki

(1918–20, 1984). These situations are, however, ambiguous because reflexive individuals may also learn from such situations.

Interviewees in the Cultural Diffusion project valued workplaces abroad where health and safety provisions were not a facade but were implemented in practice, where the work-life balance was respected and overtime was paid, where salaries were set at an appropriate level and where they felt secure, even when working in flexible liberal economies. They reported that they had acquired an understanding of the significance of such conditions abroad, but that it was difficult to transfer such conditions to established Polish workplaces. In non-relational workplaces, migrants are not even able to start talking about and sharing with others what they learned abroad. They therefore put social remittances on hold and activate them only when opportunities arise. Transfer was often only possible when one set up one's own business, though even then it was hard, for example because small employers found it expensive to pay a respectable wage on top of high social insurance contributions. With regard to work-life balance, return migrants complained that they had the feeling all the time that they earned too little money to have a decent work-life balance, even when they used their migratory savings, so it was not possible to transmit this new lifestyle back to Poland.

## 5. Domain 2: Local community and neighbourhood

The second domain of social remittances relates to local community and neighbourhood, and to the links between these places and receiving countries. In this domain, the outcomes of social remittances intermingle with other factors. This section does not aim to measure the outcomes of migration as compared with other factors. However, I begin by describing non-migration-related reasons why communities are changing (chiefly thanks to EU-funded investments), before proceeding to the social impacts of migration, including social remittances, in the strict sense of deliberate transmission by individual agents, but also other types of influence. There is considerable resistance to social remittances in local communities, resulting from traditionalism, fear and conservatism (Garapich 2016b), so that many potential social remittances are acquired but later blocked from diffusion. As in the previous section on workplaces, I discuss both those features of the domain which make it (un)suitable for social remitting, and detail some types of remittance which are transmitted in this context. The section is based on the findings of the Cultural Diffusion study, published in book form as Grabowska, Garapich, et al. (2017).

As mentioned in [chapter 1](#), Poland is not monolithic – there are many local Polands, with different migration cultures or even subcultures ([White 2016d](#)), each of which generate, contextualize and have an impact on transfers of social remittances. In addition, of course, each locality has its specific history and socio-economic profile, which creates certain opportunity structures. Local communities are understood here as a system of interactions supported by institutions and social control that produces a consensus on cultural values and might be framed by territorial boundaries ([Morawska 1998](#)). The territorial boundaries are important for our analysis because they enclose the point of departure and point of return. The territories of local communities have extended as a result of migration to become transnational ([Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994](#); [Levitt 1998](#)) or even translocal ([White 2011](#)), connecting sending and receiving localities. The translocal space is the channel of social remittances discussed in this chapter.

Pszczyna (pop. 26,000), Sokółka (pop. 19,000) and Trzebnica (pop. 13,000), despite their status as county (*powiat*) seats, are all small towns with a palpable sense of social control and cultural consensus – as mentioned by Morawska (1998). This appears to be strongest in Sokółka. Sokółka, situated in north-east Poland, was formerly within the Russian partition. Its population has been settled locally for generations, though the town lost nearly half its residents during the Holocaust. Migration permeates local life: since the nineteenth century, the town has experienced international migration, originally to the United States and Germany, but most recently to London. Pszczyna is marketed as the ‘pearl of Silesia’ and, unlike Sokółka, celebrates its multicultural past. Wealthier than Sokółka, it has much lower unemployment (in 2014 the rate was 6 per cent, compared with 16 per cent in Sokółka).<sup>4</sup> Apart from emigration of ethnic Germans during the period of communist rule, international migration was limited before 2004. Migration today is to a range of destinations and is an individual matter, not very dependent on migration networks. Although Pszczyna interviewees expressed a sense of local, partly Silesian, collective identity and roots, they did not seem to feel the social pressure which marked Sokółka. Finally, Trzebnica, in Lower Silesia, was repopulated with Poles after the expulsion of the German population in 1945, so its population is less well-rooted. Unemployment in 2014 stood at 12 per cent, and many people work in nearby Wrocław. Trzebnica interviewees were less positive and locally patriotic than Pszczyna residents. As in Pszczyna, however, mass international migration began only after 2004, is to a range of destinations and is not very dependent on migration networks. Since these are all small towns, face-to-face contact

is still an important channel for transfer of information. Moreover, as small towns they contrast with the major Polish cities, which, as dynamic growth hubs, seem to be 'ahead' in numerous respects.

### 5.1 Changing infrastructure, institutions and streets

The landscape of Polish local communities has changed as a result of Poland's accession to the EU in 2004. With the support of EU structural funds, roads, railways, sports centres and outdoor sports facilities, water parks, arts centres and sewage systems are being built or improved. Potentially the new investments have created relational public spaces, such as parks and arts centres, where return migrants and stayers can interact and share experiences. Migrants returning to local communities for family visits, and return migrants who remembered the local infrastructural landscape they left some years ago, are struck by improvements locally. Nonetheless, Polish small towns often still suffer from high unemployment (as in the case of Sokółka and Trzebnica) and underdeveloped public transport connections with vibrant urban labour markets. Pszczyna, by contrast, was not viewed by its residents as being underdeveloped, even by comparison with locations where they had worked abroad.

Change also comes to local institutions as they adapt to the consequences of migration. For instance, in Pszczyna local law courts the clerks needed to obtain additional competences, connected to dealing with transnational alimony cases and issuing various documents of powers of attorney. In Sokółka, an NGO working with a primary school organised an Internet corner for children who wanted to communicate with their migrating parents. In Trzebnica, because of a growing number of international marriages, priests with foreign language competences were in demand. Because of migration, local people, wanting good Internet connections, installed reliable broadband.

Alongside infrastructural change, the appearance of the towns has also changed, partly thanks to the efforts and money of migrants. Local inhabitants noticed well-tended gardens, painted fences and tidier areas surrounding houses. In some cases facades had been remodelled in accordance with styles brought from foreign countries. Such adaptations had already been observed in towns marked by high volumes of migration in the 1990s. For instance, in Siemiatycze, where a large number of inhabitants worked in Brussels, local houses were altered by special plastering on their facades (Jaźwińska and Okólski 2001). Today the architectural and construction novelties brought from abroad are more subtle but also

locally specific, something which is connected both to the migratory channels and the local culture.

Local streets are also changed by the presence of small businesses set up by return migrants: shop signs display English-sounding names, and interiors imitate premises visited abroad – although of course such innovations might be connected with wider globalisation trends. The return migrant businesses, as already mentioned, were usually small in scale. They included beauty parlours, second-hand clothes shops, tattoo studios, construction services, pet shops, fast-food bars, pubs and sports centres. Non-migrants also commented on how people behaved, dressed and talked on the street. They reported that return migrants dressed in a more relaxed style, wearing the flat shoes or fashionable Wellington boots, the skinny jeans and the branded sunglasses that they apparently wore on British streets.

## 5.2 Social and cultural change

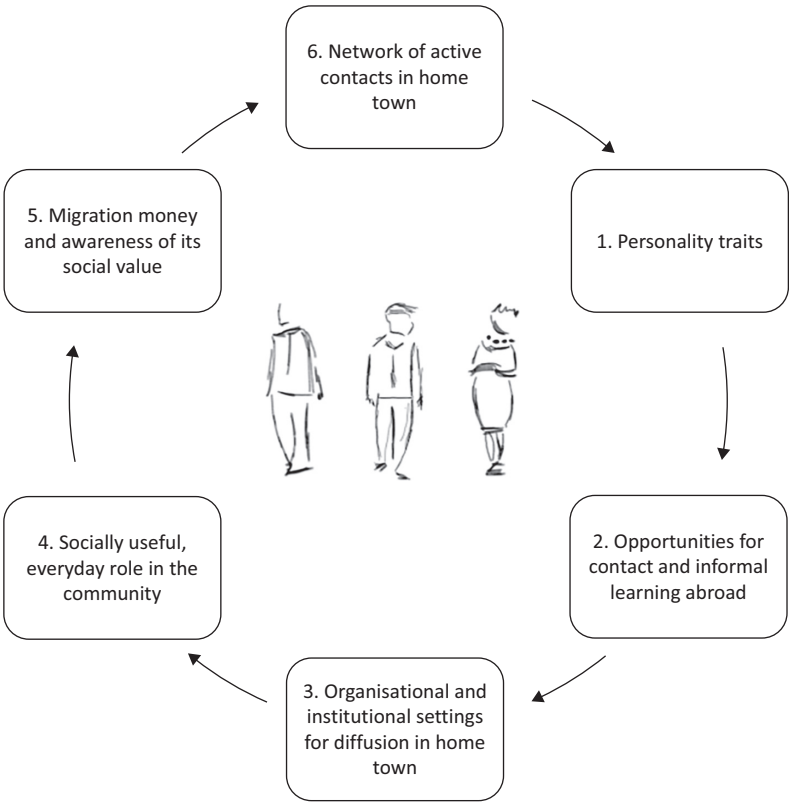
Alongside these more visible changes, migration also influenced the behaviour of local stayers. For example, interviewees had noticed an increase in digital skills among the older generation (the parents and grandparents of migrants), who wanted to be in touch with family members abroad but might not otherwise have started using computers. They also suggested that content searched on the Internet was educational because people wanted to learn about the places to which they or their relatives and peers migrated, and their languages and cultures. Some people, claiming that service in bars and restaurants had improved, suggested that this could be attributed to migration influences.

Migrants brought a great variety of small changes to their communities, though in many cases these changes were isolated and barely perceptible. Transmission occurred through three main channels: (1) through direct, accidental, spontaneous contacts between migrants, return migrants and non-migrants, often resembling gossip ('someone said to someone else'); (2) through observations of migrants' behaviour and practices upon visits and after return; and (3) through conscious activities by migrants directed to achieve the transmission of social remittances. In the first two cases, migrants themselves often failed to notice such social remittances. However, the project additionally interviewed stayers who were members of some return migrants' social networks and who noticed changes unremarked by the migrants themselves. These stayers provided 'proof' of the influence of particularly active and successful remitters,



whom we labelled ‘agents of change’. In addition, the researchers spent time on return migrants’ premises, such as beauty parlours, pet shops, sports centres and bars, and were able to observe their conversations with customers. Thanks to these multiple perspectives, we identified different examples of social remittances, as well as gaining insights into how they were successfully diffused among those individuals whom we labelled ‘followers’ of the agents of change. We built up detailed information on eight particular agents of change filtered out from 121 in-depth interviews and as a result of this were able to analyse more precisely how ordinary migrants act as agents of change on a community level (see figure 4.1).

As illustrated in figure 4.1, agents of change had specific personality traits, such as helpfulness, openness and readiness to learn. While living abroad, they had contacts and experiences that enabled them to acquire social remittances (e.g. because they worked in relational work-



**Fig. 4.1** Combined set of features of an agent of change. Source: Based on Grabowska, Garapich, et al. (2017).

places rather than in fish-freezing factories, as discussed above). They typically also maintained their transnational contacts with the destination country after returning to Poland. Their experience of living in local neighbourhoods abroad was also important in shaping their informal learning, particularly their encounters with ethnic diversity (see [chapter 8](#)). Having returned to their communities of origin, the agents of change worked in organisations, institutions and businesses where they came into contact with the public. Successful social remitting was particularly likely if there was a close match between the site where they had acquired social remittances in the destination country, and the place where they tried to diffuse them in Poland. For example, one of the most successful agents of change was a nurse who worked in care homes both in the United Kingdom and Poland. Agents of change were respected within the local community, often because they performed roles regarded as socially useful, such as nurses, teachers and athletes. They had brought money to invest from abroad, and were aware of its social value. Finally, and in addition to their regular customers or clients, they had a network of active contacts (co-workers, friends and family) among whom they diffused social remittances.

### 5.3 Pen portraits of some local agents of change

[Chapter 7](#) of *Migrants as Agents of Change* (Grabowska, Garapich, et al. 2017) provides details about the eight agents of change identified in the book, with detailed pen portraits of four. This chapter describes three of the four cases not presented using portraits in *Migrants as Agents of Change*. One case is a married couple.

#### *Pen portrait 1: Ksenia (and her husband)*

Ksenia, having worked in Edinburgh for two years to pay off some debts, returned to Poland in 2007. She had positive memories of her employment in Scotland, where she had risen from kitchen porter to chief chef, as well as cleaning well-off people's houses after hours. She claimed that the most important thing she had learned was 'respect for others, [including] respect for employees'. Ksenia did not forget her experiences abroad, and kept in touch with her friends by social media even after she returned, visiting them every year. Since she not only paid off her debts but also saved money to invest in setting up a business in Poland, Ksenia established a pet shop in Trzebnica. Although she was not using the specific skills she had practised abroad, becoming an employer gave her the opportunity to imitate employment practices that she had liked when working in the

kitchen in Edinburgh, including offering lunch breaks, promoting respectful work relations, providing fair pay and not expecting subordinates to pretend to work non-stop even when there was no work to be done.

I believe that if everything is done – my boss [in Edinburgh] taught me – if everything is done, then you can even read a book, but it has to be all done . . . I don't demand, [like other bosses] that girls stand with a cloth and pretend that they are cleaning for eight hours, even though it's polished so much that they'll make a hole in it soon . . . And my husband has a workshop and the same practice.

Also interesting in this quotation is the fact that Ksenia's husband, who had stayed in Poland while she was in Scotland, had adopted the same approach to his own employees (i.e. it was an example of practices spreading through the returnee's network of personal contacts). Furthermore, as part of the package of social remittances she brought from Scotland, Ksenia tried to persuade her customers of the importance of cleaning up after their dogs in public spaces, as well as non-pet-related, household matters such as spending time with one's children and giving them full attention after school, rather than cleaning the house. By virtue of being a shop owner she was able to spread ideas among members of the local public. As often seemed to happen, Ksenia had developed certain personality traits by being abroad, becoming more confident, active and outspoken as a result of her migration experience. In Trzebnica she was active in a local Catholic organisation and refuge for lone mothers, where she tried to help women stop returning to abusive partners. She was openly in favour of IVF treatment, trying to convince local priests and potential mothers.

#### *Pen portrait 2: Iwona and Marcin*

Iwona and Marcin were parents active in social spaces connected to a school in Pszczyna. Although both were quite well-educated, they did manual jobs in the United Kingdom in household and construction services. To compensate, they enjoyed a rich cultural life, often visiting cultural institutions, mostly in London. One of their children was born in the United Kingdom, the second in Poland. When Iwona had her baby in Poland they made loud comparisons with the UK experience, which they portrayed as involving fathers to a greater extent and being more respectful towards mothers, offering more pain relief, and providing better postnatal conditions and care. They also had extensive contacts with other parents from a local school and shared with them their experiences and practices brought from abroad. Iwona and Marcin's 'followers' in Pszczyna reported that 'when

Iwona and Marcin allowed their children to do small things in the household and gave them small responsibilities, we decided to do the same. They were always telling us stories about how they experienced the UK’.

They reported giving small tasks to children, such as performing shopping errands and returning from school and walking the dog on their own; giving children space and some autonomy; managing family time, recognising that both quality and rubbish time with children was important; and teaching their children to behave differently in public spaces towards other users and teaching them tolerant, non-judgmental, non-excluding attitudes towards difference – not just in cases of racial difference but also when children at school had certain diseases or sensitive family situations (Grabowska, Garapich, et al. 2017).

### *Pen portrait 3: Radek*

Radek, a sports coach from Sokółka, was able to re-establish the local sports centre, a kind of local training club, thanks to economic remittances. While abroad he had been working on a construction site but still was doing sport and outdoor training. One day a man invited him to a British sports club. They exchanged information about practices and training methods in boxing. He later transferred these to the local sports club in Sokółka. The most important thing he was able to remit was, however, not about boxing practices but about organising boxing competitions and box sparring as community and family events, where people could come, observe, join in, and spend time together. A local informant reported: ‘Radek brought families in Sokółka together. He showed everyone that sport can be also family quality time.’ Clearly the practices Radek introduced to Sokółka had an integrative function for the local community.

## **6. Conclusions**

This chapter was not intended to provide an exhaustive analysis of social remitting, but rather to zoom in on three domains of social life in order to exemplify and catalogue social remittances and their complementary role in contributing to social change in Poland. It is important not to overstate or romanticise the effects of social remittances. Nonetheless, our research projects enabled us to uncover many examples that otherwise might have passed unnoticed and that are rarely if ever mentioned in discussions about migration impact.

In the first domain (the workplace), the most important type of social remittance turned out to be transferable social skills. These included

cognitive skills, self-management and discipline, contacts with others, and work organization skills, including team work, as identified in quantitative studies. They also encompassed the ability to communicate cross-culturally, deal with emotional labour, take the initiative and act independently, as identified in a qualitative study. Workplaces are the best micropublics not only for acquiring social remittances but also for transferring and implementing them.

In the second domain (local community and neighbourhood), it is crucial to remember that there is not one single Poland, but instead many local Polands. The diversity of the country has an impact on social remitting. The local community is the best space to observe that social remittances travel in packages, from small demonstrations of social remittances visible in public spaces (e.g. outfits, outdoor sports, names of shops, interior decoration), through improving quality of service and consideration for others in public spaces, to relations between people in family and friendship circles. We showed that a single workplace in the local sending community can act as a site to transfer hard and soft skills and to transmit attitudes to diversity, gender relations and raising children, and also as a space for organising small charity actions as imitated from foreign countries. The packages of social remittances can contain both fleeting and meaningful social remittances.

The local communities highlighted in this chapter share similarities and differences. All locales are multireligious local communities (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox and Jewish), but each locale has a different share of each religious group. All locales experienced historical border shifts. After EU enlargement in 2004, intense post-accession migratory movements have taken place in all the towns, flows that have brought many exchanges of emotions, attitudes, ideas and practices. In all communities migration has created a bifocal perspective and a greater appreciation of one's home area in Poland. Local communities have stopped perceiving themselves as peripheries, due to opportunities to migrate and travel, and to the quality of available services and products in shops and family homes (some of them brought by migrants). The towns share labour market challenges and constraints, such as high rates of unemployment, limited job openings and restricted opportunities for occupational mobility. In all the towns, inhabitants stressed the impact of EU funds on local infrastructure.

Among differences, we encountered a varying social visibility of migration, which is connected to different patterns of migration: networked versus individualistic. Inhabitants also have different orientations towards places: stronger in Sokółka and Pszczyna, but weaker in Trzebnica. They also differ in relation to the encounters with the receiving

societies, which is connected to the clustering of Sokółka residents in London as opposed to the more scattered destinations of migrants from Pszczyna and Trzebnica. In all towns, however, migration has some impact on both family and peers and also on workplaces and local institutions. These in-depth studies showed that local migration-impacted changes are complementary to the changes achieved thanks to EU funds.

In this chapter we have shown the significance not only of micro-publics (e.g. workplaces, sport clubs, health centres) but also of intimate spaces (e.g. family and peer groups) for acquiring, transmitting and implementing social remittances. Banal everyday encounters can have a significant effect (Valentine and Sadgrove 2012) only when human agency is involved. The chapter has shown that despite the availability of a wide range of channels of diffusion for social remittances, human contact, preferably face-to-face, still remains the most powerful and effective channel of diffusion at every stage of social remitting.

We have discovered that local return migrants can be identified as ordinary agents of change when they combine a set of personal and social features such as: (1) certain personality traits; (2) opportunities for contact and informal learning abroad; (3) organisational and institutional settings for diffusion in the home town; (4) a socially useful, everyday role in the community; (5) migration money and awareness of its social value; (6) a network of active contacts in the home town.

We are left with the question of how social remittances ‘scale up’ from all three domains and how they might become a macro phenomenon. Social remittances of the sort described in this chapter are not visible on the level of macro trends in Poland. However, they all have the potential, on a micro level, to ‘stabilise’ social change, in Portes’s (2010) sense of consolidating wider patterns of change, change that follows both from system transformation and from EU enlargement.

## Notes

1 <https://bkl.parp.gov.pl/projekt.html>.

2 ‘Transitions from Education to Domestic and Foreign Labor Market: The Role of Locality, Peer Group and New Media’ (grant funded by National Science Centre, Sonata Bis Programme), 2016–20, a multisited qualitative longitudinal study focused on three localities (small cities of pop. c.100,000) and on peer groups from secondary school originating from the researched local communities. (N [peer groups] = 12–15 per locality, max. 45); n [individuals] = 350 in three waves.)

3 The study was conducted by the Polish Agency for Entrepreneurship Development, in cooperation with the Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

4 Unemployment figures for each town are from the local job centre (*Powiatowy Urząd Pracy*).

# Post-accession migration and the Polish labour market

## *Expected and unexpected effects*

PAWEŁ KACZMARCZYK

### 1. Introduction

Post-accession migration from Poland, similar to mobility from other ‘new’ EU member states, presents an interesting case in the European context. As most recent Polish migrants take paid work abroad, it is commonly described as labour migration. This feature makes Poland somewhat different from most West European countries, which record a great variety of types of outflow, but particularly migration related to education or family reunification. Thus the impact of migration on the Polish labour market seems to be an important research area.

The aim of this chapter is to present post-accession migration from Poland and its labour market impacts in the broader perspective of economic and social change in the country. We apply a temporal lens to assess the short-term effects of migration (changes in employment, unemployment or labour market participation); the medium-term impacts (potential or real wage pressure and structural changes in terms of human capital stock, specifically in the context of the brain drain/brain gain debate); and consider also the long-term outcomes of mobility. The last perspective seems particularly important as it is commonly overlooked in neoclassical economic studies and is still understudied in the Polish context. An attempt will be made to identify and explore a series of unexpected or not obvious consequences of recent migration from Poland, including some discussion of its relation to development and its potential impact on

structural changes on the domestic labour market, including the local and regional labour markets.

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows. Section 2 briefly analyses Polish macroeconomic trends in the post-enlargement period. Section 3 discusses labour market impacts of migration, with short-term impacts analysed before medium-term ones. Section 4, concluding the chapter, speculates about the possible long-term impacts of Polish post-accession migration.

## 2. 2004 and beyond: Macroeconomic developments and labour mobility

One of the main reasons to be part of the EU enlargement process was to speed up the process of economic convergence in CEE transition economies. Against this background, the post-2004 period is commonly described in terms of a (moderate) economic success (Campos, Coricelli and Moretti 2014; Grycuk and Russel 2017; LE Europe 2017; WEF 2017; Weresa 2016). Analysis of macroeconomic data shows clear progress in the case of the most important variables, including GDP, GDP per capita and levels of investment and consumption. Progress is also observable in labour market developments – employment, unemployment, productivity – with (a risk of) growing inequalities (see Brzeziński 2017; Bukowski and Novokmet 2017) and the outflow of labour as major ‘costs’ of EU enlargement.

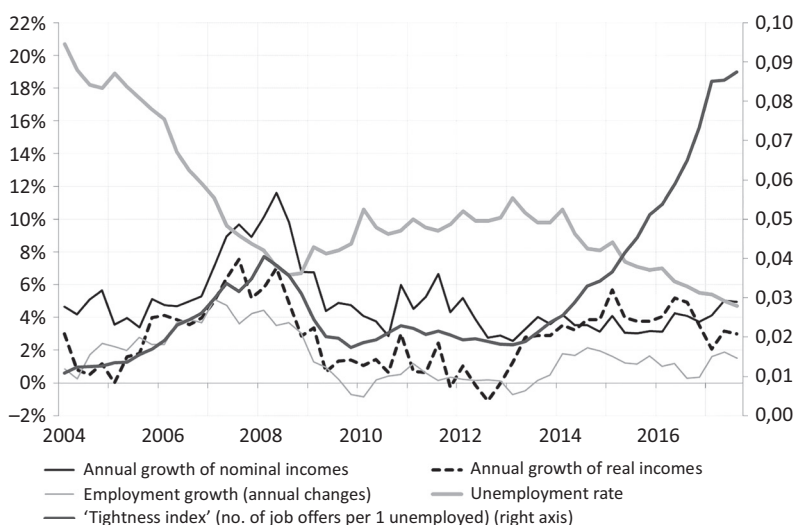
In terms of economic growth, measured by GDP or GDP per capita, Poland is one of the winners of EU enlargement. Over the period 2004–16 average annual GDP growth in Poland amounted to 3.6 per cent and was significantly higher than the EU average (1.5 per cent), but also higher than the average rate of growth in the pre-accession period (2.85 per cent in the period 2000–3). Moreover, Poland was the only EU country that managed to avoid massive recession during the period of global financial crisis (2008–9). In terms of GDP per capita expressed in PPP (Purchasing Power Parity), Poland is gradually closing the gap towards the EU average: in 2005 Poland’s PPP GDP per capita amounted to only 50 per cent of the average, to reach 69 per cent in 2009. GDP per capita increased in all Polish regions. Change was between 10 and 33 per cent from 2004 to 2016, with Mazowieckie region, around Warsaw, experiencing the biggest increase. As discussed in [chapter 2](#), in some regions, and in smaller towns and villages, growth was much less visible than in the ‘metropolises’.



Other macroeconomic indicators also improved: international trade (increasing shares of international trade in GDP); competitiveness (the competitiveness index increased from around 4.30 in 2004 to over 4.50 in 2016, when the EU average was 4.80); investment (according to UNCTAD data the annual inflow of FDI to Poland equalled 5.2 billion over the period 1994–2003 and 12.4 billion in the period 2004–2016); as well as other indicators (Eurostat data; Gryczuk and Russel 2017; LE Europe 2017; WEF).

Gryczuk and Russel (2017) emphasise that these developments are attributable to a number of factors, in particular to the implementation of EU legislation and institutional rules, and the introduction of the European Single Market and EU funds. They also leave some space for migration as a possible economic trigger. In particular, the impact of the Single Market (and Single Labour Market as a part of it) implementation on GDP per capita has been unequivocally positive in most of the EU member states, with the Polish outcome close to the EU average (LE Europe 2017, 35).

As suggested above, the labour market is a major area of change in the post-2004 period. Figure 5.1 presents several important variables depicting these developments in a synthetic way. Figure 5.1 documents a clear tendency for conditions on the Polish labour market to improve since EU enlargement, with its two major features being (1) a substantial decline

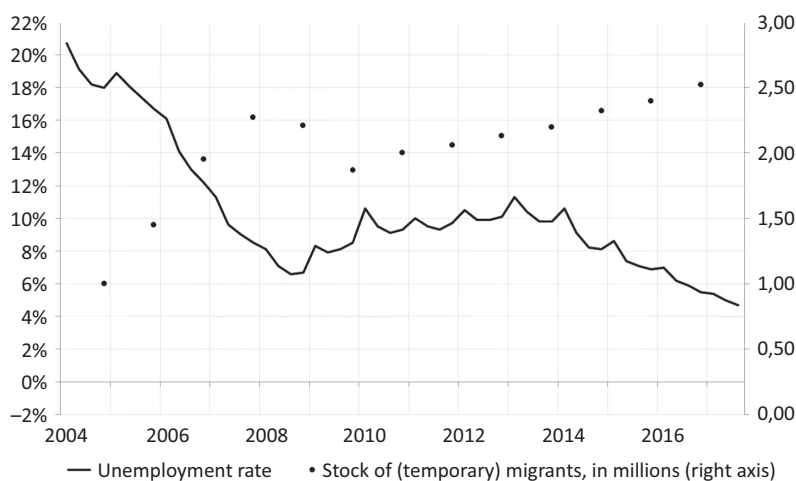


**Fig. 5.1** Labour market development in Poland, 2004–17.

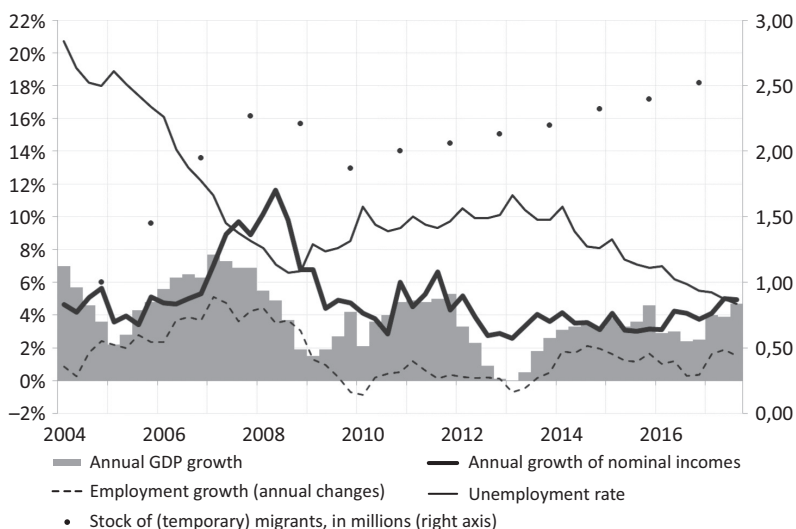
Source: Based on Roszkowska et al. (2017).

in unemployment and (2) employment growth. The decrease in unemployment is noted since 2004 but was particularly high in the first post-accession phase (a decline from around 20 per cent in 2004 to around 6 per cent in 2008). Employment growth is almost steady, with two recession episodes in 2010 and 2013. There is also a clear upward trend noted in terms of the level of wages, both nominal and real. Similarly to other variables, the effect was the strongest in the pre-crisis phase. Figure 5.1 includes an additional variable that can be used as a synthetic measure of labour market ‘fitness’: the labour market tightness index, defined as the ratio of vacancies to unemployment and as such shows how the labour market reacts throughout the business cycle. The tightness index presents a clear upward trend, with a minor interruption during the period of global economic crisis. Additionally, its recent values suggest that the very nature of the Polish labour market is changing from a state of permanent oversupply of the workforce to a situation of growing competition for workers (Roszkowska et al. 2017). The main question we ask in this chapter is to what extent those developments are attributable to migration.

A back-of-the-envelope analysis (figure 5.2) shows that increase in the scale of (temporary) migration in the post-2004 period was clearly associated with positive changes in terms of unemployment (as one of the key labour market-related variables). Figure 5.3, however, points to a far more complex and nuanced picture. The introduction of a number of



**Fig. 5.2** Migration from Poland (stock of temporary migrants staying abroad) and Polish labour market, 2004–17. Source: Own elaboration based on GUS data and Roszkowska et al. (2017).



**Fig. 5.3** Migration from Poland (stock of temporary migrants staying abroad) and selected macroeconomic variables, 2004–17. Source: Own elaboration based on GUS data and Roszkowska et al. (2017).

additional variables to the picture presented above may, rather, suggest that substantial changes in unemployment are cyclical in nature and related to GDP growth and the process of job creation (see detailed discussion in next section).

### 3. Labour market effects of migration from Poland: Expected and unexpected effects

The basic ‘analysis’ presented above shows that a more nuanced and disciplined approach is needed to disentangle the ‘migration effect’ from a number of other potential sources of labour market changes, including those resulting directly from EU enlargement (e.g. the single market, EU funds, infrastructural investments, and so forth).

From the perspective of economics, labour migration implies temporary or permanent movement of labour resources, which effects changes within the relative supply of production factors (labour in relation to capital), and, consequently, may lead to further adjustments at the level of wages, employment, and unemployment. As a result, in the short run, the outflow of migrants from a given country may be regarded as a sort of sup-

ply shock. Available studies of post-accession migration reveal that the issue is more complex. Instead, to assess the effects of migration at the level of the labour market of the migrants' country of origin, it is necessary to refer to a variety of time perspectives and consider all different levels of analysis (i.e. local, regional and national) (Borjas 2004; Janicka and Kowalska 2010; Kaczmarczyk, Mioduszevska and Żylicz 2009).

In the short term, the main effects are related to a change in the supply of labour and thus refer particularly to changes in employment and unemployment, and eventually in the number of those who are out of the labour force. In the medium term, a tendency to adjust to market equilibrium might be visible, which may result, among other effects, in pressure on wages.

Additionally, structural features of the outflow are of some importance, particularly the quality of human capital. In the long term, more fundamental adjustments are possible, including changes in the structure of the economy (capital/labour ratio, demand-side modifications); occupational and social mobility of native workers; and immigration of foreign labour. In this section we focus on short- and medium-term effects. We elaborate on the long-term developments in Section 4.

Considering both short- and long-term effects of migration, it is important to acknowledge that Poland, similar to other transition economies, struggled after the onset of transition with a severe oversupply of labour. As a result, during most of the pre-accession period, unemployment was very high. In 2002, immediately prior to the accession, it amounted to over 20 per cent. In fact it was commonly presented as the main trigger of incomplete migration, as discussed in [chapter 2](#) (see also [Kaczmarczyk 2005](#)). Additionally, the Polish labour market used to be described in terms of low participation and employment rates, structural mismatches and a large share of long-term unemployment ([Kaczmarczyk 2011](#)). In 2004, the number of unemployed people started gradually to decrease. According to Labour Force Survey (LFS) data, the number of unemployed people decreased from 3.2 million in early 2004 to 1.2 million in late 2008, while the unemployment rate decreased from 19.1 per cent to 7.1 per cent.<sup>1</sup> (See also [figures 5.1–5.3](#).)

Against this background, the potential effects of post-accession migration should be assessed. All available statistical data prove that at the same time as the mass outflow of migrants was taking place, the situation in the domestic labour market was improving. This pertained to both the decrease in the number of people remaining out of work and the fall of the unemployment rate to a level not registered during the transition period. Thus, a basic analysis such as the one presented in the previous

section may suggest that the decline in unemployment might be an outcome of post-accession migration.

Nonetheless, a series of arguments challenge this thesis, which is close to the commonly invoked ‘unemployment export’ hypothesis. First, the fall in unemployment as observed since 2004 was also strongly correlated with a rise in employment: employment rates increased from 44 per cent to 50.1 per cent between the second quarter of 2004 and the second quarter of 2008. Second, the general trends in the labour market continued even once migration rates had stabilised (i.e. in 2007 and 2008), which points to the fact that changes in the Polish labour market may have resulted primarily from structural and business cycle changes in the whole economy. Third, the scale of migration from Poland was not large enough to substantially impact on the unemployment level. For example, between 2004 and 2008 unemployment fell by two million, which is a much higher number than the total outflow, including also persons not active on the labour market (Kaczmarczyk 2011; Kaczmarczyk 2014).

These reservations with regard to the export of unemployment argument are supported by Bukowski, Koloch and Lewandowski (2008), who investigated the impact on unemployment in Poland of changes in demographic structure, economic activity and employment. They found that changes in the level of unemployment in the case of people of mobile age should be attributed predominantly to a rise (or decline) in the level of employment (i.e. the process of job creation) (see also previous section and figure 5.3). Effects of both the remaining factors were marginal. However, they noted an impact of changes in the proportion of people economically active, which can be attributed to migration. Similarly, Budnik (2007) revealed that, even if post-accession migration from Poland was quite substantial, it had only a moderate impact on the estimated shares of people employed, unemployed or economically inactive. For the direct post-accession period (2004–5), the bias in unemployment rate due to migration (the difference between unemployment rates estimated for migration and non-migration scenarios) was negligible. Similar results are provided by Barrell, Fitzgerald and Riley (2010).

Nonetheless, even if national-level statistics do not provide evidence that migration was particularly responsible for reducing unemployment in Poland in 2004–8, quantitative and qualitative research at the local level tells a different story. As mentioned above, growth was uneven across Poland. In some locations with less economic growth and a high level of unemployment, or employment in the informal economy, ‘unemployment export’ seemed very visible to the casual observer. It is chronicled in ethnographic research (e.g. Rakowski 2016; White 2017). Similarly, a

quantitative study by Kaczmarczyk and Okólski (2017) based on regional LFS data provided clear evidence that there is a statistically significant (and negative) relationship between the scale of outflow and unemployment at the regional level.

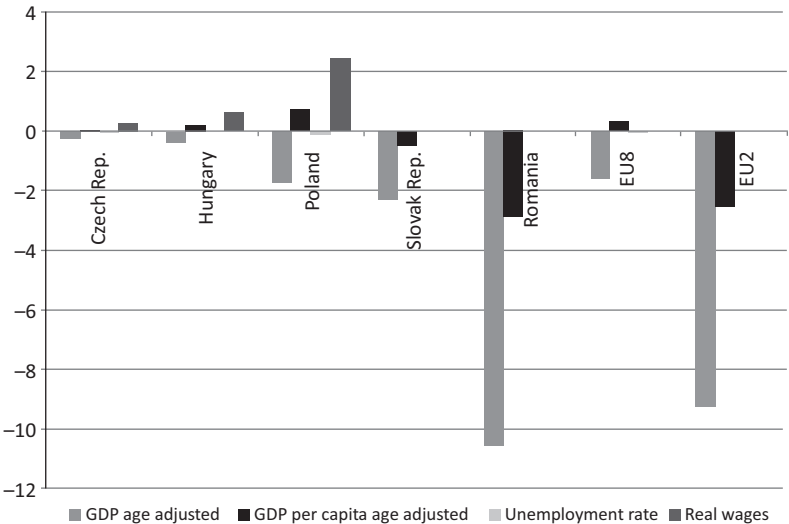
With regard to medium-term effects (i.e. the impacts on wage levels nationally), the evidence of migration influence is also inconclusive. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, wages have risen substantially in Poland since EU accession. The emigration of part of the labour force should drive up wages for workers remaining in the sending country. However, Budnik (2008) measured the impact of migration on wage levels (using a search and matching model) and concluded that the impact on the wage rate of an increase in outflow of workers of around 4.5 per cent, as observed between 2002 and 2006, was moderate and in 2006 was lower than 1 per cent.<sup>2</sup> Kowalska (2011) provides similar results. She estimated the elasticity of wages in Poland as a consequence of migration from Poland, based on LFS data. Her analysis revealed that a 10 per cent labour supply shock caused an increase in wages of between 2 and 4 per cent (on average, depending on certain assumptions). Interestingly, elasticity of wages with respect to international mobility was higher for men than for women and for employees under 30 than for older employees. As shown by Gumuła et al. (2011), when post-accession migration reached its peak (mid 2007), almost 30 per cent of employers declared migration of Poles an important factor responsible for pressure on wages. This share declined to 1 per cent in 2008 and 2009, and to 0 per cent in 2010, notwithstanding still massive emigration (Gumuła et al. 2011; Janicka and Kowalska 2010). The fact that migration had more of an impact on increasing men's wages than women's points to the importance of selectivity issues, as discussed in [chapter 2](#): the fact that some types of people migrate more than others. It also reflects different sectoral impacts of migration from Poland.

As concluded above, the transition period in Poland saw a dramatically difficult situation on the labour market, marked by severe unemployment. Thus vacancy rates were extremely low for most of that period. The vacancy rate and, particularly, the share of firms reporting problems with finding employees increased rapidly from 2005 until late 2007 (i.e. in the period of the most dynamic outflow). The number of companies experiencing labour shortages as a barrier to growth varied, from practically none prior to 2005, to 14.2 per cent in the third quarter of 2007. It then fell again, to around 6 per cent, in 2008. The most seriously hit sectors included construction (35 per cent of firms reporting hiring difficulties) and manufacturing (over 15 per cent) (NBP 2008). Importantly,

throughout 2007, labour shortages were declared the most important barrier to growth (NBP 2008).

Nonetheless, as the business cycle phase changed in 2008, labour shortages ceased to pose a serious problem for most firms. This suggests, again, that labour shortages in the post-accession phase were an outcome primarily of the favourable economic situation rather than necessarily of outward migration. This conclusion becomes even clearer when referring to figure 5.3, particularly to the labour market tightness index. This shows that although the tendency continues, more recently it has been driven increasingly by demographic factors unconnected to migration (i.e. to the age structure of the population).

The arguments presented above are to a large extent supported by several studies relying on general equilibrium models or simulation approaches. Across all the evidenced cases, the effects of migration for the Polish labour market were evaluated as negligible but generally positive (Barrell, Fitzgerald and Riley 2010; Brücker et al. 2009; Holland et al. 2011). (See figure 5.4.) Importantly, all the studies quoted argued that post-accession migration from Poland and other CEE countries brought substantial benefits, but particularly for receiving economies, and for the



**Fig. 5.4** Short- and medium-term effects of post-accession migration, Poland and other CEE countries, 2004–10, changes in per cent (GDP, real wages) or percentage points (unemployment rate). Source: Own elaboration based on Holland et al. (2011).

United Kingdom and Ireland most of all. In turn, the effects of the outflow for sending economies are mixed. While in Poland and Slovakia, the effects of migration are low but predominantly positive, in those CEE countries that noted very limited emigration in this period (the Czech Republic and Hungary), the effects are insignificant. In the case of Romania and the Baltic states, massive out-migration contributed to a relatively large decline in GDP and did not bring any serious improvement in the labour market. This would support the thesis that the effects of migration depend on the scale of the outflow but are also strongly conditional on structural conditions at origin and on the general economic performance of the sending country. In fact, the already mentioned positive changes in the labour market ought, rather, to be credited to changes in the sphere of creating (and destroying) job offers. These processes of job creation/destruction, in turn, largely depended on a particular phase of the business cycle, and were further enhanced by the influx of EU funds.

Nonetheless, one needs to address also the migration effects on regional and local labour markets, which can be far more severe. Additionally, it is important to consider the more long-term effects of migration, particularly on human capital formation (brain drain/brain gain debate), and the possible impacts of return migration.

The selective nature of post-accession migration from Poland manifests itself, above all, in the overrepresentation of highly educated people. The mobility of highly educated people potentially generates medium- and long-term effects that may impact the human resource capital in the migrants' country of origin, and, therefore, influence its potential for growth. 'Brain drain', the commonly used term to describe this phenomenon, is derived from an approach, developed in the 1960s and 1970s, that focused on the negative effects connected to the outflow of highly educated people, including the fiscal costs, since taxpayers in the sending country were paying for the education of future migrants, or the negative impact of migration on the productivity of other factors of production (particularly capital) (Bhagwati and Hamada 1974; Grubel and Scott 1966).

In the 1990s, however, a new approach was proposed to challenge this already well-established view of highly skilled mobility. The so-called 'new economics of brain drain' rests on an assumption that migration may, in fact, be seen through probabilistic lenses. In other words, the fact that migration may happen in the future is in itself something that may have an impact (cf. the 'prospect channel' of migration influence mentioned in chapter 3). The migration option, if available, may not be utilised in fact. We can also assume that in specific circumstances the possibility of going



abroad at some stage in the future may induce people to become more highly educated or skilled, and to make bigger investments in human capital, since they expect a higher return from the human capital abroad. In such cases, even large-scale migration of highly educated people may increase human resource capital in the migrants' country of origin. Scholars refer to this as 'brain gain' or 'beneficial brain drain' (Beine, Docquier and Rapoport 2001; Mountford 1997; Stark 2005).

Fihel et al. (2009) presented one of the first attempts to quantify the skill selection process in the case of post-accession migration. In the case of Poland as well as other CEE countries, there was a clear pattern of positive selection of persons who completed tertiary education (even if controlling for age differences between migrants and the sending population). If we agree on a purely statistical meaning of the term 'brain drain' (that migrants are more highly-educated on average than stayers), then we can conclude that post-accession migration did result in brain drain. This was also indicated by a series of other studies (Clark, Drinkwater and Robinson 2014; Drinkwater, Eade and Garapich 2009; Holland et al. 2011; Kaczmarczyk and Tyrowicz 2015; Sporton 2013). Hence, although the trend in Poland has been for a steady increase in the share of university graduates (see chapter 2), a simple reading of the situation would be that migration creates a counter-trend and somewhat diminishes the scale of this phenomenon. However, the situation is perhaps more complex, as discussed in the following section.

How the effects of this phenomenon should be assessed is an additional question. 'Drain effect'<sup>3</sup> implies that the selective outflow of well-educated or skilled persons should impact negatively on labour resources and thus on the economic performance of a sending country. Available statistical evidence shows that it is extremely difficult to ascribe a direct impact to post-accession migration on the skill mismatches in specific sectors and regions in Poland.

On the one hand, as noted in the previous section, the immediate post-accession period was apparently marked by a growing scale of labour shortages. The number of vacancies increased rapidly from 2005 until the third quarter of 2007, and this process was accompanied by a rising number of companies reporting labour shortages as a barrier to growth (see also the previous section). On the other hand, labour shortages ceased to be perceived as a serious issue in the first phase of recession, despite the still extremely high scale of out-migration. Moreover, as already mentioned, the shortages of workers were most apparent in construction (with 35 per cent of firms affected) and manufacturing (more than 15 per cent). They were comprised mainly of qualified workers (in 2007–8 a

shortage of qualified workers was reported by almost 40 per cent of Polish companies) (Kaczmarczyk, Mioduszevska and Żylicz; NBP 2008).

Statistical data therefore suggest that the labour shortages as observed in the post-accession period are comprised mainly of qualified workers, but not necessarily those who might be described as highly skilled. The main sectors suffering shortage of labour included construction and manufacturing. Considering the skill structure and work experience of post-accession migrants, it is hardly possible that these job vacancies could be filled by the migrants choosing EU labour markets. The point is that post-accession migration comprised large numbers of persons with tertiary education and, additionally, persons who were leaving abroad directly after completing their formal education and without experience on the Polish labour market. They were not interested in taking up low-skilled jobs in their location of origin, even if they were ready to take this kind of job while staying abroad. Thus it is commonly acknowledged that due to the general situation on the Polish labour market (an over-supply of university-educated labour), post-accession migration is to be assessed more in terms of 'brain overflow'<sup>4</sup> than 'brain drain' (Kaczmarczyk, Mioduszevska and Żylicz 2009; Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008; Kahanec and Zimmermann 2009).

Importantly, even if the impact of post-accession migration on labour markets in the region seems largely exaggerated, and although there is no clear evidence of the brain drain on a national level, there is a common perception that the effects of migration are clearly visible on the sectoral level, particularly in health services. There is no reliable data on the real scale of migration of medical professionals from Poland, but some indication of the scale of potential migration of this occupational group is provided by the numbers of certificates confirming qualifications and professional experience issued to Polish medical professionals (as required by employers in EU15 countries). The data shows that the scale of the outflow is not so large as to pose a threat to the Polish healthcare system in the short term. Nonetheless, some serious sectoral imbalances are possible and already visible, as the outflow is most significant in specialisations receiving the lowest average incomes within Poland's medical labour market (anesthesiologists, radiologists) and in those for which there is high demand within foreign labour markets (e.g. plastic surgeons). A temporary or permanent imbalance in local and regional labour markets is also likely to appear, or has already appeared (Kaczmarczyk 2014; Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2005).

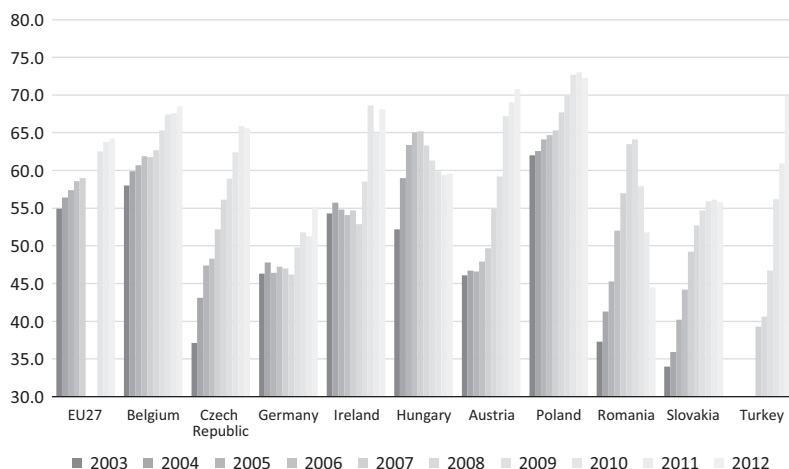
As suggested by Beine et al. (2001), the existence of dynamic or ex ante effect (see endnote 3) implies an increase in the investment in

education driven by migration prospects. In Poland, one might guess that this was occurring, and contributing to the already mentioned growing popularity of university education. There are over 1.8 million students in Poland, and data from the Central Statistical Office (GUS) shows that already in the early 2000s, the gross enrollment ratio (the ratio of current students within a given age cohort) in the 19–24 age group was close to 50 per cent. The question is, however, whether this change is attributable to migration.

First, it is important to note that the growing mobility of well-educated persons can be a rough outcome of the simple fact that the Polish population is increasingly well-educated – according to many studies, the recent increase in migration among the highly skilled is to a large extent attributable to the country's general improvement in human capital and is a natural consequence of educational developments in Poland. Along these lines, the high propensity among well-educated Poles to migrate constitutes brain overflow, as defined above, being partly attributable to the low absorptive capacities of the Polish labour market. This is clearly suggested by very high unemployment rates among persons aged 25–29 who completed tertiary education (Kaczmarczyk 2014).

Second, similar patterns in terms of evolution of the enrolment rate are observed in most European countries, including both CEE and EU15 countries (see figure 5.5). A common pattern of investing in human capital can be noted in long-established EU countries (Germany, Ireland), in new EU member states (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia) and in countries aspiring to be part of the EU (Turkey). Importantly, if we consider post-accession countries, this group comprises both countries experiencing high rates of labour migration (Poland, Slovakia) and those with very low emigration rates (Czech Republic). Diverse patterns, as noted in the case of Hungary or Romania, cannot be interpreted with reference to migration factors either. This, indirectly, shows that a rising tendency to invest in human capital can be attributed to factors other than migration (or the migration option) alone.

Third, even if the concept of brain drain appeals, its analysis in methodological terms remains very challenging. Available econometric evidence points to possible brain effects based on macro (Beine, Docquier and Rapoport 2001; Docquier and Rapoport 2009) or micro studies (Commander, Kangasniemi and Winters 2004; Commander et al. 2008; Gibson and McKenzie 2011; Lucas 2004). In Poland and other benchmark countries, we would argue that changes in the structure of educational attainment are caused by a set of non-migratory factors (e.g. a growing interest in obtaining higher education, structural changes within the



**Fig. 5.5** Students enrolled in tertiary education (ISCED 5–6) as percentage of the total population aged 20–4. Source: Own elaboration based on Eurostat data.

system) and, so far, it has been impossible to extract any post-accession brain effects.

Fourth, a critical factor here is the performance of migrants abroad. One of the key assumptions of the model proposed by Beine et al. (2001) is that the rate of return to education should be higher abroad than in country of origin. This is supposed to induce more people to invest in their education in order to engage in gainful international migration. This assumption is commonly challenged, however. Egger and Felbermayr (2007) argue that returns to human capital abroad are important in the context of (potential) investments in human capital. By contrast, Bertoli and Brücker (2011) claim that relative returns to human capital in the receiving countries are below those of the sending countries, although – even so – migration may still create additional incentives for human capital investment.

Nonetheless, if we observe substantial ‘brain waste’, all possible benefits attributed to brain effect can be seriously overestimated. Thus studies looking at the position of Polish migrants abroad and returns to their human capital are highly relevant here. Kaczmarczyk and Tyrowicz (2015) show that in the British labour market, both EU8 and EU15 migrants are on average better educated than the natives (particularly when it comes to tertiary education: almost 32 per cent of Poles resident in the United Kingdom have completed tertiary education, as compared to 21 per cent of

natives). Notwithstanding, this does not translate into relevant occupational positions or wages that reflect investments in education: the bulk of Polish migrants are employed in basic occupations and thus earn on average considerably lower salaries than their British counterparts. Moreover, the rate of return to education in the case of well-educated Polish migrants in the United Kingdom was among the lowest on the British labour market, and even lower abroad than on the domestic labour market. Similarly, based on UK LFS data, Jakubiak (2016) assessed the extent of (possible) wage discrimination on the British labour market between 2004 and 2014. The study indicated striking differences in real wages: among post-accession migrants, Poles and citizens of the Baltic states are doing particularly badly compared not only to EU15 migrants but also to third-country nationals (e.g. Indian or Pakistani migrants). This is due to the generally lower level of skills they possess (as compared to natives) but also to substantial wage discrimination. These observations are consistent with studies (Clark and Drinkwater 2008; Dustmann, Frattini and Halls 2010; Fihel et al. 2015) that suggest Polish migrants abroad tend to be employed in positions far below their skill levels (severe overeducation). This feature of Polish society abroad can be of some importance not only in terms of how migrants function abroad but also upon (potential) return to the country of origin.

Return migration is often perceived as a development-supporting phenomenon: returnees are expected to bring not only the new skills and competences but also the financial and social capital needed to improve social and economic conditions at origin. Even if the relationship between return migration and development is in practice far more complex (see chapter 3), it is commonly believed that positive outcomes of return migration can overcome negative (social) effects of mobility. In the case of the EU new member states, empirical evidence, though relatively scarce, generally confirms experiences of other migrant-sending countries. Martin and Radu (2012), based on a cross-country analysis of return migrants in CEE countries (utilising EU-LFS data), argued that return migrants are in a statistically significant way less likely to be active on the labour market than non-migrants and additionally are more prone to be self-employed upon return. This effect is attributable to opportunity structures rather than to conscious choice, as returnees tend also to be more likely to face unemployment after return (see also McCormick and Wahba 2001; Piracha and Vadean 2010). Interestingly, those outcomes can be to some extent an outcome of endogeneity as return migrants are apparently sorted across regions where labour market opportunities are scarce. As discussed in chapter 3, migrants tend to return to their home locations, which typically

have inefficient labour markets. Nonetheless there is still a substantial wage premium for those who decided to return, ranging from 10 to 45 per cent (11 per cent in Poland). In other words, they can earn higher wages than they would have done if they had not migrated.

The impact of the return of migrants on the Polish economy has been limited, as return migration to Poland is much lower than expected and the brain gains are limited. There is an increasing tendency toward more long-term migration and an orientation toward settlement, which reduces returns (Janicka and Kaczmarczyk 2017). Most effects are observed on a regional scale, for example skill waste and unemployment (Brzozowski 2011; Coniglio and Brzozowski 2018). In terms of economic behaviour upon return, Polish data shows that the share of entrepreneurs among return migrants is slightly higher than in the general population, as discussed by Grabowska in [chapter 4](#) of this volume.

## 4. Conclusions

Empirical evidence on Poland demonstrates that in a labour market that is encumbered by serious structural maladjustments and that is undergoing major demographic change, even short-term relations between the outflow of labour, defined as a supply shock and labour market processes, do not have to be so very obvious, as predicted by the basic models of the labour market. In simple words, in a country with severe oversupply of labour, workforce outflow does not have to be detrimental in a purely economic sense.

Unlike in some other CEE countries, short- and medium-term economic impacts of post-accession migration on Poland have been only moderately positive: migration has contributed relatively little to the impressive growth in GDP per capita and in the level of wages, or to the striking decline in unemployment. However, effects may be much more perceptible at local level.

There are no clear signs of brain drain, in the sense of certain professions losing large numbers of highly educated workers, although there is (statistical) brain drain, in the sense that the average migrant is better-educated than the average Polish citizen. Hence migration somewhat works against the overall trend towards an increasing share of the population holding university degrees. Prospects of a migration-driven brain gain effect, where returnees put new professional skills to good use on return to Poland, are questionable, mainly due to the unfavourable labour market position of Polish migrants abroad. However, as Grabowska argues

in [chapter 4](#), soft skills are more likely to be transferred. Last but not least, return migrants fare relatively well on the labour market in the sense that they can earn higher wages, but still a relatively large number of returnees face problems reintegrating into the Polish labour market, so consider moving abroad again.

Against this background it is important to consider long-term effects of post-accession migration of Poles, going beyond a simple neoclassical approach that assumes capital/labour neutrality. Here, potential outcomes are far more extreme than observed and documented in the short run. First, most empirical evidence shows that the demographic impacts of recent migration from Poland will be detrimental. Those population 'losses' are to a large extent unavoidable and will be particularly severe for selected Polish regions (Opolskie, Podkarpackie, Podlaskie) ([Fihel 2015](#)).

Second, one needs to address the possible structural impacts of migration on the domestic labour market. Kaczmarczyk and Okólski (2008) proposed a concept of 'crowding-out migration' to address potential long-term outcomes of recent migration from Poland and other CEE countries.<sup>5</sup> They argued that, in the long run, recent migration from Poland may lead to significant structural changes in how labour resources are allocated spatially. In this sense, migration carries with it a certain modernising potential, whereby modernisation is understood as the transformation of regions characterised by a large share of farmers producing for their own consumption, as well as surpluses of labour resources impossible to absorb into areas capable of joining the competitive global economy. The concept refers both to key reasons of migration as well as to its potential impacts. With regard to the first point, as shown above, contemporary migration from Poland involves with particular intensity young and relatively well-educated people who, additionally, originate from peripheral regions marked by a large share of smallholdings, as well as poorly developed labour markets. Arguably it is the limited absorption possibilities of the local and regional labour markets that are responsible for the mass migration following EU accession. Considering previous barriers to mobility, Polish accession to the EU and the resulting mass mobility have for the first time in Polish history created the basis for, on the one hand, the outflow of workforce surpluses (as in the case of settlement migration), and, on the other hand, the reallocation of labour resources in the domestic labour market (as in the case of temporary migration and return migration, which could result in internal migration within Poland, although there is little sign of this at present). The mechanism described by Kaczmarczyk and Okólski (2008) ought not to be

treated as ultimate or categorical. Widespread migration paves the way for structural changes, but in itself does not create them. The outflow of labour surpluses abroad only gives space for public policies whose aim should be to improve the effectiveness of the labour market, primarily at the local and regional level. Today, around 14 years after EU enlargement, one could argue that this chance, created by massive post-accession migration, is already lost.

## Notes

- 1 Interestingly, the situation had started to improve before EU enlargement, as the Polish economy grew. Growth was particularly important directly before accession, with 3.9 and 5.3 per cent of GDP growth in 2003 and 2004 respectively.
- 2 Note that this effect is smaller than obtained in general equilibrium studies, discussed later. Apart from the different methodology applied, the reason lies in the shorter period covered.
- 3 We follow an approach, proposed by Beine, Docquier and Rapoport (2001), of distinguishing between static (or ex post) effects of the outflow, which can be termed 'drain' effect, and dynamic (ex ante) 'brain' effects related to a possible increase in the investment in education induced by the prospect of migration.
- 4 A 'brain overflow' occurs when there is an intentional or unintentional oversupply of educated professionals in the sending country, whose abilities cannot be matched to job offers. In such a case, migration of the highly skilled occurs at low or zero opportunity costs and can reduce the labour market supply-demand inequality in the sending country.
- 5 This idea goes back to the concept, formulated by Layard et al. (1992), that one of the major conditions of accelerating modernisation in southern European countries in the aftermath of World War Two was a mass outflow of labour. This outflow led to a sort of 'crowding out' of the labour markets, which, along with the application of various labour market policies, measurably improved their effectiveness.



# Family relations and gender equality in the context of migration

KRYSTYNA SLANY

## 1. Introduction

Most chapters in this book directly or indirectly discuss the impact of migration on families, both family members living in Poland and those resident abroad. The chapters address various themes, such as intertwined social remittances about parenting, gender roles and family logistics ([chapter 4](#)), lifestyles and transnational family ties ([chapter 7](#)) and reproduction plans and birth rates ([chapter 9](#)). Gender is fundamental to any sociological analysis, and the family is a basic social unit, so it is appropriate to mainstream the topics of gender and family through the book rather than confine discussion just to [chapter 6](#).

In this chapter, however, I look more closely at the family, particularly family relations as seen through a gender lens – in other words, how relations evolve, or not, towards greater gender equality. A gendered perspective, taking into account the different experiences of women and men within families, seems essential in face of ongoing changes in post-modern family life, and in the context of intense geographical mobility. A gender lens also exposes wider relations within society (i.e. the economic and cultural structures influencing expectations, obligations, cultural scripts and stereotypes relating to gender).

The chapter is based on the premise that gender is partly constructed through the migration process and therefore how individuals experience, practise and survive migration, as well as the (re-)negotiations it involves. More than ever, Polish families have connections both with Polish society and families abroad, and at the same time with life in Poland itself.

Migration is a factor directly modifying relations within the family and creating new family types.

The chapter argues that, insofar as families abroad influence families in Poland – directly, through social remittances, or more indirectly – their impact seems to be to back up existing models rather than to promote more democratic ones. Families in migration seem stuck half-way in transition from a traditional model (wife = homemaker, husband = breadwinner) to a partner-like distribution of gender roles. In our 2015 research, participants shared a vision of equality within the family, but equality was more talked about than practised. Most Polish families implement a type of everyday maternalism, where women manage the family's affairs without much support from their partners, and suppress tensions and conflicts arising from unequal distribution of roles, because they are busy trying to combine their domestic roles with paid employment. Migration also helps the pluralisation of forms of family life and the decline of the extended family household.

Families abroad differ in composition and lifestyle, and this affects how they are influenced by migration, as well as the nature of change they can bring. Some migrant families formed in Poland; others, abroad. Mixed marriages (where one spouse is not Polish) are increasingly common. One or both parents can be living together with children, be in the process of reunification abroad, or be living abroad while children remain in Poland (Ryan and Sales 2013; Ślusarczyk and Pustułka 2017; Ślusarczyk and Slany 2016; White 2011).

Gender equality has many dimensions (Krzaklewska et al. 2016), and in some areas of gender equality Poland has changed quite significantly. For example, an active feminist movement has successfully backed the introduction of electoral quotas and increased female representation in parliament. However, this chapter is concerned only with certain aspects of gender equality linked to family models: relations between partners, the distribution of roles and responsibilities within households and extended families and work-life balance.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 2 presents some existing knowledge about trends regarding gendered aspects of Polish family relations, mostly from a gender equality angle. This is followed by conceptual discussion of how migration intersects with other sources of change in Polish families. After some information about the chapter's main data sources (see table 6.1), the chapter explores the influence of migration in Poland, before considering changes within 'Polish society abroad'. The chapter concludes by summarising how social trends are shaped by specific factors and how migration contributes to those factors.

**Table 6.1** Main data sources for [chapter 6](#)

Name of the data source	Time period	Methodology and sample size
<i>Gender Equality and Quality of Life: How Gender Equality Can Contribute to Development in Europe – A study of Poland and Norway</i> (GEQ)	2013–16	<p>The GEQ survey research, conducted in Poland in 2015, was inspired by the multidimensional model of gender equality measurement, developed at the University of Oslo's Centre for Gender Research. The research encompassed various dimensions of gender equality: gender equality experiences in childhood, gender equality in family life, gender equality in the labour market, social and civil participation of men and women, experiences of violence, men's and women's health and quality of life.</p> <p>There was a total of 1,501 respondents, and the response rate was 64 per cent. The survey interviews were carried out with the use of Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and the Computer Assisted Individual Interview (CAII), the latter employed for the questions on sensitive matters. The survey research was complemented by secondary data analysis, social policy analysis and qualitative research. The latter employed the techniques of focus group interviews and media analysis.</p> <p>The results of this research allow us to formulate a diagnosis of the existing inequalities, underlining the importance of the structural, cultural and institutional factors promoting gender equality. Furthermore, they make it possible to analyse the influence that gender equality has on the quality of life.</p>

*Doing family in transnational context: Demographic choices, welfare adaption, school integration, and everyday life of Polish families living in Polish-Norwegian transnationality (Transfam)*

2013–16

An integrated methodological approach was adopted: numerous information types and sources, as well as multiple analytical and data collection tools; a transnational context as a primary analytical framework, broadened and supplemented with input from family studies, sociology of childhood and conceptualisations of social capital; a mixed-methods study: qualitative (biographic and semi-structured interviews and observation) and quantitative (survey on-line) research; Polish migrant parents and children (a novel aspect of our research) were invited to take part.

The Transfam project therefore conducted a large number of studies using various research methods, on both the Polish and the Norwegian sides:

Interviews with 40 parents; interviews with 50 children from Polish-Polish and Polish-Norwegian marriages, plus an incomplete sentences test with the children, as well as using a drawing method and child's bedroom observation; 20 expert interviews with teachers, social workers, priests, leaders of Polish diaspora organisations; 16 interviews with other representatives of Polish diaspora communities; Internet survey: n = 648.

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Source: Own elaboration.

## 2. The background: Family models and gender roles in Poland

Following the collapse of the communist regime in 1989, the system transformation wrought deep changes in family life, in the context of wider social change. In addition to endogenous change, Polish society is exposed to wider, global-scale developments, including migration. These wider developments also affect that basic unit of human society, the family. Changes directly influence sexuality, how partners are chosen and unions established, relations between partners, parenthood and how long unions survive. They also promote the creation of various more complex types of family unit (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Mazzucato, Schans and Caarls 2015; Zinn, Eitzen and Wells 2009).

After the fall of communism, when gender equality was part of the official state ideology, a backlash against women's emancipation occurred, leading to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles. Despite the pressure put on subsequent governments by the women's movement and feminists, gender equality has not been a focal point in policies from the 1990s up to today (Warat 2016). Nonetheless, family matters are often at the centre of political and social attention. Polish conservative claims that increased contact with the West, including westward migration, has had a destructive effect on family relations are built on prejudice and a simplistic framing of migration impact as being primarily about loss (see chapter 3). Evidence-based research adopts a more adequate conceptual framework, taking into account transnational ties.

Among the most obvious trends in Polish family life are the continuing importance attached to the family (Grabowska 2013a, 2013b) and declared high levels of satisfaction with one's own family relations (Czapiński 2015a, 188). They also include much greater acceptance of family types other than married couple plus children, and some support for a redistribution of roles within the household – reflected to a much lesser extent in actual practice.

Around 80 per cent of Poles state that their family constitutes the main purpose of their lives and is the most important thing to them (Grabowska 2013b). Although the significance and high value placed on family life can be explained partly by hostility to the communist state, it has its roots in Polish history. During the period 1795–1918, when Poland was partitioned between Russia, Prussia/Germany and Austria, the continuity of the Polish nation depended on the survival of the Polish family,

its maintenance of Polish culture and religion and a perpetuation of a sense of national identity. The national fate was bound up with the family as the miniature 'private fatherland'.

Many studies show a sea change of greater acceptance for a range of family types: pluralisation of family life has become not just socially acceptable, but also more widely practised (see, e.g. [Grabowska 2013b](#); [Kwak 2005](#); [Slany 2007](#); [Szlendak 2010](#); [Warzywoda-Kruszyńska and Szukalski 2004](#)). As many as 91 per cent of Poles agree that lone-parent families can be considered 'families'. Acceptance figures for unmarried couples are 78 per cent; for childless couples, 71 per cent; and for non-heterosexual couples bringing up children, 23 per cent ([Grabowska 2013b](#)). There is a marked liberalisation of views on divorce: according to CBOS surveys, only 13 per cent are 'very opposed' to it, while the World Values Survey (2012) puts this figure at 16 per cent.

As for the actual variety of family types encountered in Poland, the 2011 census ([Szałyts 2014](#)) showed that the most common type of family remained a married couple with children (49.7 per cent of all families). However, since the 2002 census the share of that type of family had fallen by nearly 7 per cent. By contrast, informal partnerships have increased dynamically, by over 60 per cent – although their total share among families was small, at 3 per cent. The number of single parents with children had risen to over a quarter of the total, to stand at 2,502,900 (including 328,000 fathers with children). The changes correspond to changes in age of marriage, and new types of educational, occupational and migratory careers, which in turn lead to a reduction in family size. Only 12.4 per cent of families contained three or more children, compared with about 18 per cent in 2002.

With regard to attitudes towards gender roles within the family, according to many studies (e.g. [Duch-Krzystoszek 2007](#); [Grabowska 2013a](#); [Titkow 2007](#)), men as well as women increasingly declare support for the principle of sharing caring and breadwinning roles within a 'partner-like' or egalitarian marriage, while in practice men still do less caring and housework than women. In comparison with research in the early transformation period ([Gwiazda 1993](#); [Anon.1997](#)), support for a traditional model has declined. Recent CBOS research ([Grabowska 2013a](#), 12–26) shows approval for the partner-like model at 46 per cent but also indicates that quite a large group (23 per cent) prefers the traditional model, in which the wife looks after the house and the man is the breadwinner, or the so-called mixed model (22 per cent), where both partners are in paid employment, but the wife is expected to care for the house and children as well as working.

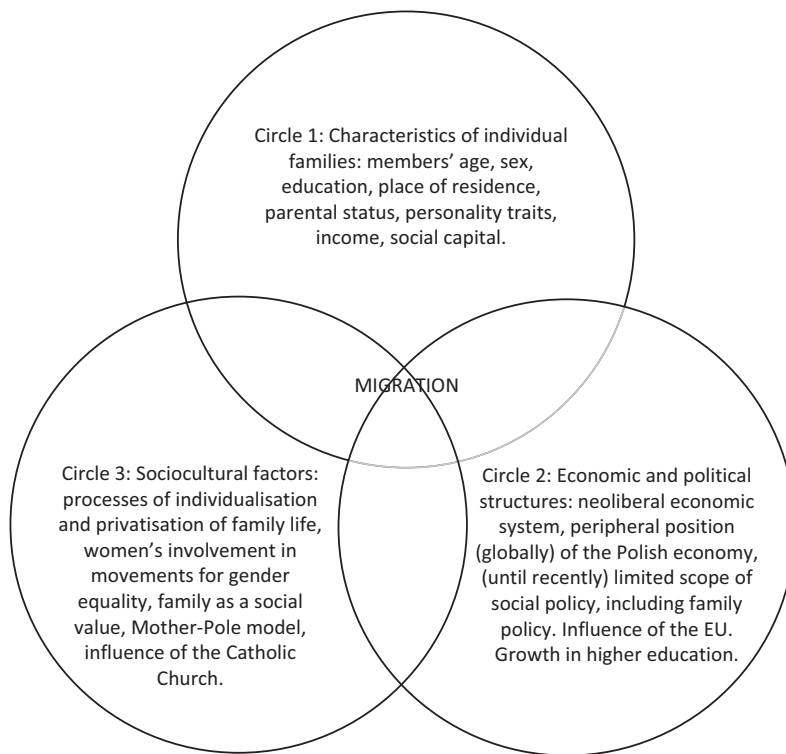
With regard to how these models are put into practice, as recently as the early twenty-first century, according to European Social Survey data, almost every third husband in Poland did no housework on week-days, and every fifth husband stated that they never helped in the house at all (Duch-Krzystoszek 2007, 136). Duch-Krzystoszek's own research showed that in over 80 per cent of marriages the wife alone bore the burden of housekeeping (laundry, cleaning and cooking). It emerged that young men almost all regarded responding to requests to share housework as part of a power struggle within the marriage. Models were practised because they were most functional for the family and its phase in the life cycle. According to CBOS (Grabowska 2013b), by 2013, partner-like marriages were the most common category (27 per cent), followed by mixed marriages (23 per cent) and traditional marriages (20 per cent).

As already discussed in this book, Polish social trends are complex, and change is more evident in some parts of society than in others. Overall, urban, better-educated, younger families, with higher incomes and no children are likely to display more egalitarian behaviour (Grabowska 2013b). The traditional model is mostly practised by younger women, those with lower levels of education, those with lower income, and mothers. The mixed model is practised by women aged 35–44, in paid employment, with children.

There is a wide divergence between the preferred and actual model, with 52 per cent of women failing to achieve their desired model (Grabowska 2013a). Women are more likely to indicate such discrepancies if they have higher education but are from small towns, younger or with low incomes. In addition, women with higher education and paid employment often feel that they spend too little time on their family; work and family are competing priorities and, to use Elisabeth Badinter's (2013) expression, this results in 'overloading the boat'.

### 3. Migration and changing trends in families and gender roles: Reflections on intersecting factors

Since the 1990s, Polish society has undergone deep, complex and multi-dimensional change, affecting every sphere of life and all social organisations and institutions, including families. Social change can be understood as changing models of behaviour, social relations and social structures and institutions (Sztompka 2005, 22). Different strands of change are interconnected, since economic restructuring and political reform have also had an impact on social and cultural processes. Figure 6.1 shows the



**Fig. 6.1** Contexts of social changes relating to migration and families in Poland today. Source: Own elaboration.

intersecting contexts of family change in Poland, to help understand how migration links with wider patterns of change. Migration results from changes in each sphere, but it also causes change. [Figure 6.1](#) helps demonstrate how migration is particularly important for causing change *in some sections of society* and prompts reflection about why some families and their members are more affected than others by migration-related change. For example, if a poor family (Circle 1) from a poor region negatively affected by the transition to a market economy (Circle 2) with more conventional and religious views (Circle 3) adopts a more democratic family model this is *more likely to be the result of migration* than in the case of well-educated wealthy families from big cities, who have a greater number of different, non-migration related reasons to adopt more liberal views.

As suggested in Circle 1, how families function is related most importantly to their specific characteristics, particularly whether or not they include children; the socio-economic status of family members; social



support networks (including migration networks) within the extended family; and the agency and personality traits of family members (e.g. resourcefulness, openness, ambition). Family composition helps shape the destiny of individual households. However, changing family composition – as documented above, often a departure from the conventional model of the married couple with children, surrounded by extended family and living in Poland – is also a consequence of social change in Poland, including migration-related change.

With regard to Circle 2, neoliberal reforms since 1989 have included the retraction of state services, the transfer of caring responsibilities to individuals and families, and the spread of precarious and insecure work, all of which make it harder to combine work and family life (Charkiewicz 2009; Charkiewicz and Zachorowska-Mazurkiewicz 2009; Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2015). This latter tendency is enhanced by Poland's peripheral location within the global economy (Urbański 2014). The transition to a market economy also created fear of unemployment, and state benefits have been modest until very recently. One consequence has been that many couples have hesitated to have children (Hardy 2010; Kotowska 2014; Szelewa 2015). The general democratisation of family life – the introduction of a partner-like family model and the diffusion among all social classes of the model of engaged fatherhood (Hobson and Fahlen 2009; Sikorska 2009; Slany, Pustułka and Ślusarczyk 2016; Suwada 2016) – is inhibited by the demands of the labour market, which often require fathers to work very long hours (Boulhol 2014, 6).

These obstacles to gender equality combine with conservative cultural opposition, notably in the context of the so-called 'gender war' since 2011. Circle 3 refers to sociocultural conditions. These include the still influential ideal of the self-sacrificing Mother-Pole (Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2012; Titkow, Duch and Budrowska 2004). In the words of Hryciuk and Korolczuk (2012, 7), this is 'personal role model, stereotype . . . and fantasy'. It is part of the identity of Polish women and their cultural capital, but it also has an 'exclusionary character [for women who cannot live up to the ideal], and its reproduction is entangled in the hierarchy of social power relations'. As various research has demonstrated, the role of Mother-Pole is both contested and reproduced, including by transnational families. The Catholic Church actively promotes a traditional family model in Poland. According to the Church, women are responsible for the home and children. The Church hierarchy frequently speaks out against gender equality and influences the attitudes of many believers, as well as politicians responsible for forming state policy (Jacobsson and Korolczuk 2017; Szelewa 2015, 123).

For most Poles the family, as mentioned above, remains the most important social value. However, since 1989 Poland has become much less a society of families, and individuals have acquired more personal freedom (see also [chapter 8](#) on the individualisation of religion). Economic changes are accompanied by changes in social life, such as an individualisation and privatisation of family life, complementing the withdrawal of state services and privatising of care ([Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2015](#)). Individuals exercise greater freedom in organising their own personal lives and increasingly believe that matters such as contraception, extramarital sex and divorce are for individuals to decide for themselves, rather than following the prescriptions of the Catholic Church ([Grabowska 2013a, 2013b](#)).

## 4. Methodology

The main sources for this chapter are the findings of two research projects which provide up-to-date evidence about family trends and gender relations in Poland and abroad (see [table 6.1](#)).<sup>1</sup> On changing gender equality and family practices in Poland, the main source is *Gender Equality and Quality of Life: How Gender Equality Can Contribute to Development in Europe. A study of Poland and Norway* (GEQ).<sup>2</sup> This asks questions about the families in which respondents grew up (their ‘families of origin’) as well as about the families they created as adults (their ‘families of procreation’). The discussion of transnational families is largely based on *Doing Family in Transnational Context: Demographic Choices, Welfare Adaptation, School Integration, and Everyday Life of Polish Families Living in Polish-Norwegian Transnationality* (Transfam).<sup>3</sup> Data for demographic trends in Poland is from GUS (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Central Statistical Office).

Norway, the receiving country in which the research was conducted, is an interesting laboratory in which to study migration impact. Since the 1970s it has practised a particularly vigorous gender equality policy. Despite the 2012 so-called backlash against gender equality policies, it has never stopped treating gender equality as a core value and ‘part of Norway’s identity’ ([Krzaklewska et al. 2016](#)). All aspects of life are evaluated through a gender lens, and a range of public policy incentives and instruments promotes egalitarian relations in the family and connections between family and work lives. Policy is intended to bring positive effects for the whole of society, as well as to improve life quality for individuals: more happiness and satisfaction with family life, more children per family, less domestic violence and better mental health ([Holter, Svare and Egeland](#)

2009). When arrivals from conservative Poland encounter equality measures, such as paternity leave and monitoring of domestic violence through the Barnevernet child protection agency, this can constitute a culture shock but also lead to an enforced egalitarianism across a range of complex family practices.

## 5. Gender equality in Poland as reflected in the GEQ study

The 2015 GEQ study illustrated the trend towards modified gender equality also noted by earlier Polish surveys. A clear majority of respondents, both female and male, consider that equality between the sexes 'is important to me' (f = 83 per cent, m = 77 per cent) and 'is an important value for a fair society' (f = 83 per cent, m = 74 per cent). They consider it important for families to adhere to principles of gender equality. Women and men should divide household tasks equally and should have an equal responsibility for the family's financial stability.

However, when it comes to childcare or weighing the relative importance of men's and women's work, pro-gender equality views are not as strongly marked. Acceptance for democratisation within families and for a new gender order is therefore only partial. As many as 64 per cent of men and 57 per cent of women (a clear majority) agree that 'women still have the main responsibility for the home and family'. Moreover, 37 per cent of women and 46 per cent of men consider that 'it is right that a woman should sustain her husband's career by abandoning hers'. 75 per cent of women and 78 per cent of men consider that 'a woman who has small children (below the age of three) should not be working professionally'.

Comparing actual practices in the families where respondents grew up with the families they have formed themselves, it seems that 'managerial matriarchy' (Titkow 2007), where women are in charge of organising family life, is well entrenched and hard to modify. Unpaid work is very much the province of women, just as it was in the families of origin. Most organising, cleaning and child-rearing is done by women. Family life could not and still cannot take place without women's domestic labour. However, certain generational changes can also be observed. The respondents note small but visible changes in the direction of greater equality. There is a gradual shift towards an egalitarian model, where both partners are in paid employment, and men become somewhat more involved in caregiving. The most commonly declared joint activities are taking the child

to extracurricular classes (46 per cent), everyday childcare (44 per cent) and taking children to school (43 per cent).

Why are some families more egalitarian than others? By studying the division of household labour across two generations, the GEQ survey revealed the dynamics of gender equality in specific families. It seems that when women acquire paid employment this leads to change, thanks to their enhanced self-esteem and sense of autonomy and independence. Respondents with more egalitarian origin families were more likely to put gender equality into practice in their own family. In addition, young women learn from the examples of their own mothers, who have often been migrants. It is not uncommon for mothers to encourage their daughters to work abroad and set in motion a 'gendered intergenerational migration transfer' (Krasnodebska 2013).

As mentioned above, in survey responses Poles declare a high level of satisfaction with their own marriages and other family relations. The GEQ data backs this up, with a twist. It suggests that, though the unequal distribution of responsibilities generates many conflicts, tensions and stress, these are often suppressed. Such matters are not discussed between spouses/partners. According to 63 per cent of women and 66 per cent of men, household duties very rarely or never occasion quarrels. Here one can see the role of 'hidden power', based on traditional gender models (Komter 1989).

## 6. The influence of migration, especially maternal migration, on Polish families in Poland

Conservative social forces, which have been waging 'gender war' since 2011, blame migration for the disintegration of the family and the rise in divorce rates, as well as the 'care drain' that leaves older people without family care in Poland. The concept of a 'Euro-orphan' is used for older people as well as for children, and can similarly lead to a moral panic (Bargłowski, Krzyżowski and Świątek 2015; Krzyżowski 2013; Krzyżowski and Mucha 2014; Perek-Białas and Slany 2016). However, the conservatives' main concern is about mothering and the situation of migrants' children. This section, in keeping with the approach of our book, emphasises ties more than gaps. It considers in turn the quality of ties in transnational families of the type where just the mother works abroad, suggesting that solo maternal migration is compatible with continuing strong levels of support for the family as an institution; migration's link to increasing divorce rates

in Poland; and how migration may also be contributing to new models of caring for older people living in Poland.

Individuals and institutions that legitimise conservative discourse about migration in Poland (such as sections of the Catholic Church, conservative media and many professionals in the sphere of child welfare) portray maternal migration as a social evil. Maternal migration strengthens anti-Western discourse by providing a subject matter for debates about the supposed decline of the ideal family. Mothers' (unlike fathers') absences raise questions about child neglect and abandonment and children's undisciplined behaviour and mental health. An even more intense moral panic arises when both parents migrate, although this happens comparatively rarely, and is usually only brief, with good support networks of relatives. (Walczak's research, 2014, 64, shows that in 2014 only about 15 per cent of working trips abroad involved both parents at the same time.)

Actual empirical evidence suggests the need for a more balanced assessment of parental migration's emotional impact. Many studies show that women migrants of all nationalities find new ways of caring at a distance, ensuring the continuance of the family in a situation of temporary migration, and that their migration is always motivated by the good of the family. Migration is always 'for the sake of someone' (Małek 2011; Urbańska 2015). Families continue to exist and do not lose their identity as a result of migration (Krzyżowski 2013; Slany and Strzemecka 2016; Slany, Pustułka and Ślusarczyk 2016).

As chapter 3 discussed, scholars are divided as to whether migration promotes gender equality by leading to empowerment for women: this often seems to depend on the specific circumstances of migration. The conservative Polish view is that individual women are disempowered by migration. Women's migration is problematised in some Polish studies, which assume that sedentariness is the norm and that women should confine themselves to the private sphere. This type of study emphasises migrants' difficulties – for example, deskilling, loss of contact with family and local society, loss of self-confidence and identity, culture shock and inability to integrate, and even mental illness (e.g. Korczyńska 2003; Waniek 2007).

Recent research suggests the more differentiated experience of women, men and children who experience separation as a result of migration or migrate as a whole family (Slany and Strzemecka 2016; Slany, Pustułka and Ślusarczyk 2016). It seems to be true that Polish women are somewhat empowered by migration, and that gender equality is facilitated – but only up to a point. This is in keeping with the ambiguous quality of women's emancipation in Poland itself.

Many studies (e.g. Krasnodebska 2013, Małek 2011, Urbańska 2015) suggest that women who migrate alone have a considerable degree of agency and satisfaction from financial independence and their ability to share their material resources with family members. They add to the number of self-confident women in Polish society, changing its composition. They have new capital in the form of money, knowledge and skills. Often they are in practice the only breadwinners, breaking the stereotype that this is a male role. For example, an adult daughter of a female migrant from Podlasie told me in an interview that her mother, working as a carer in Italy, had given her father a credit card as a present. His daughter observed sarcastically that he did not put himself out to support his four children, preferring to use his wife's earnings. In such households, the women decide how to spend money and they place first the needs of children and then their husbands and parents. Despite the physical distance, they still manage the household in Poland successfully. They proudly show researchers newly built or repaired houses, with new equipment and furniture and beautiful bathrooms. They stress that they are more self-confident; for example, they feel able to travel alone and to successfully find work and accommodation. Some point out that they are better able to look after their appearance and feel more attractive (Małek 2011; Urbańska 2015).

Divorce is often seen as a consequence of migration, but research, especially qualitative studies (Danilewicz 2010; Urbańska 2015) show that family break-up is often the result not of migration as such but of conflictual events, tensions and domestic violence that took place before migration happened. Migration is a way of escaping unsatisfactory, low quality married and family life, and often offers the chance to construct life anew. Most families who are separated by migration reconstruct their ties, work on relationships within the family and try to build family unity (Danilewicz 2010; Małek 2011; Slany, Pustułka and Ślusarczyk 2016; Urbańska 2015). Official Polish statistics do show that overall the divorce rate has been rising,<sup>4</sup> but this does not necessarily imply a direct connection with migration. Among the reasons for marriages failing, protracted absence of a spouse was cited in only 1.9 per cent of cases (GUS 2016, 245), a figure that has been rising but that is so low that it does not suggest widespread disintegration caused by migration.

Divorce rates reflect not just 'demand' for divorce but also its supply: rates will rise if divorce is more available, for example through being socially acceptable. The increased incidence of divorce should be seen largely as the result of Polish society becoming more 'postmodern' rather than as a direct consequence of migration. Poles are increasingly accepting of divorce under certain circumstances (Boguszewski 2013b).

Regional analysis suggests that to understand the connection between migration and divorce one needs to take into account regional attitudes, and in particular the considerable variation in religious observance (as discussed in [chapter 8](#)). The highest divorce rates are in Lower Silesia, Lubuskie, West Pomerania and Warmińsko-Mazurskie Regions, which have both a high volume of migration and a high incidence of various nontraditional behaviour patterns, such as children born out of wedlock, cohabitation and single-parent families, mostly headed by mothers. Eastern regions – Podkarpackie, Podlasie, Świętokrzyskie, Małopolska, Lubelskie – have high volumes of migration but the lowest divorce rates in Poland ([Krzyżowski et al. 2014](#)). Therefore, even though migration does strain many marriages, it is less likely to lead to divorce in regions where the Catholic Church has greatest influence.

Nonetheless, some divorces can be linked to women's sense of empowerment following migration. Urbańska (2015) shows, on the basis of qualitative research, that as a result of migration women migrants sometimes become more conscious of how their home lives had been marked by unequal, often violent and oppressive relations (sometimes with the extended family). The reshaping of these relationships through migration sometimes made them decide on divorce. Undergoing the family situation and experiencing it anew as the result of migration exemplifies how migration empowers women who are otherwise deeply disadvantaged and how it changes how they evaluate the quality of their own lives.

The exodus of younger people abroad intensifies the ongoing process of the ageing of the Polish population and worsens the already unfavourable ratio of working-age to retired people<sup>5</sup> ([GUS 2014](#)). The share of people aged 75 and over, with enhanced care needs, Poland-wide, is currently 7 per cent but by 2050 will increase to nearly 17 per cent. Particularly large proportions of such people are to be found in some regions that also have a high volume of migration, such as Świętokrzyskie, Podlaskie and Opolskie. The age dependency ratio in Poland (children and retired people per 100 population) in 2015 was 34 but by 2050 is projected to be 84, an increase of 2.5. The 'index of sandwich generation support' showing the potential of people (aged 50–64) to simultaneously support children and older parents, indicates that currently in Poland there are potentially three people available to support each person aged 75 or over, but by 2015 there will be only 1.2 ([GUS 2014](#); own calculations). This indicator is the most telling evidence of the ticking care time bomb that is radically modifying the intergenerational care contract. It is a problem not caused solely by migration, but it is certainly exacerbated by it.

Migration definitely represents a challenge for the norm that families, especially women, are expected to care for older relatives (Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2015). However, relations with relatives are often carefully maintained by nuclear families living abroad. This is shown, for example, by their invitations to relatives to join them. Family capital is still of key importance and can be transferred between families in both receiving and sending countries (Grabowska, Garapich, et al. 2017). Although one should not downplay the significance of research showing the weakening of family relationships, it is important to point out that most migrants and non-migrants who belong to transnational family networks try to maintain responsibilities for family members outside the nuclear family (including for older people), so that closeness and family loyalty continue across international borders (see Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Glick 2010; Goulbourne et al. 2010; Slany, Pustułka and Ślusarczyk 2016).

The absence of adult children abroad has up to now not had as much impact on care practices for older Poles as might have been expected. As Krzyżowski (2013) shows in his monograph on the topic, migrants and their older parents located in Poland do provide one another with mutual support. Although some forms of care for older people obviously require constant physical presence, which sometimes means employing a home help, other types of care do not (e.g. emotional support and advice, making doctors' appointments, paying bills, Internet shopping in Polish cities and purchasing large quantities of non-perishable items on visits home). Migrants also bring technology, medicine and food products from abroad. Though physically absent much of the time, they therefore help organise the everyday life of their parents (Krzyżowski 2013; Krzyżowski et al. 2014).

Botterill (2011), in her study of young Poles in the United Kingdom and Poland and their family attachments, found that they declared the intention of returning to Poland if their parents fell ill. Kordasiewicz, Radziwinowiczówna and Kloc-Nowak (2018) point out that few post-2004 migrants so far have parents at an age where they need constant care, and that discussions within migrant families (including disagreements with siblings based in Poland) are more about possible eventualities rather than actual situations. One can see, however, that migrants are exposed abroad to alternative ethnomoralities of care, which can influence how they feel about the best caring arrangements (in future) for their own parents.

Given the limited state support for older people in Poland, migrants need to find ways of direct, physical caring for older relatives within the context of a reduced family network locally. Private care homes have mushroomed in recent years. Migration, together with the improving



quality and availability of institutional care, could be one factor helping to erode preconceptions that institutional care is inferior. Krzyżowski (2013, 176–7), in a survey of five hundred parents of migrants living in Poland, found that migrants' parents were more accepting than other Poles based in Poland of the idea that older people could be cared for (in a variety of different ways) by people other than immediate family members. Hence this is a social remittance. It seems that many care homes already house parents of people working abroad (Karwowska and Pochrzest-Motyczyńska 2015) and that Poles will be forced increasingly to use institutional care for lone older people.

There are no studies to date of the experiences and practices at the final stage, where parents are in advanced old age, dependent and disabled, or in the process of dying and needing constant care. Using intermediaries or only visiting sporadically does not resolve the care problem in such situations. This theme is still a kind of taboo.

## 7. Transnational practices and gender equality in families living abroad

A large and increasing proportion of families based in Poland has relatives abroad. As discussed in earlier chapters, the period since 2004 has seen a greatly increased number of 'transnational families', in the sense of nuclear families living abroad but with extended family in Poland. Such families in most cases can be labelled 'transnational' for the extra reason that they engage in frequent transnational practices. To some extent this model supersedes the 1990s model of 'transnational family', where just one parent migrates, with the rest of the household remaining in Poland. The proliferation of transnational families of both kinds is a social change in its own right, both because it contributes to the emergence of 'Polish society abroad' (see chapter 9) and because of its implications for relatives living in Poland. It adds to the overall diversification of family types in Poland discussed above (see also Slany 2007). The post-2004 exodus has been partly caused by the chain migration of family members and the process of family reunification. Polish nuclear families are now to be found in every corner of Europe. This phenomenon has been accompanied by a Polish 'baby boom' in receiving societies such as the United Kingdom, Ireland and Norway (see, e.g. Milewski 2007; Pustułka, Krzaklewska and Huang 2018).

Many research participants – for example, in the Transfam project – state that it is better for families to be together, to resolve the problems

created by separation (Slany and Struzik 2016). However, decisions that a wife and children should leave Poland are not taken lightly and should not be seen simply as a decision taken by the migrating male, imposed on his family. First, reunification abroad testifies to the fact that the family sees itself as a joint endeavour. Second, the process of reunification is a test of power relations within families, requiring serious discussion between couples, within the extended family and sometimes also with older children (Baldassar and Merla 2013; Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Goulbourne et al. 2010; Slany and Strzemecka 2016). White (2017) shows how some women are able to block reunification attempts. Such women feel that direct contact with their family members based in Poland is more important than reunifying the nuclear family abroad. Sometimes, too, women exert their influence in the opposite direction: women living abroad persuade friends and relatives living in Poland to migrate to join them.

As discussed in earlier chapters, this migration wave, in the context of EU mobility rights, has led to the adoption of transnational ways of life, as families 'spread their roots' across geographical space and family members find new ways of communicating, often using electronic media. To change the metaphor, this creates a kind of transnational family bridge. The 'transnational turn' in migration studies, which has been such a paradigm change since the 1990s, has helped scholars focus on actual transnational families and their social fields/personal networks, relationships that are modified and reconfigured by migration (Baldassar and Merla 2013; Castles and Miller 2009; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). Using a transnational lens helps reduce the previous overemphasis on economic and structural explanations for migration, makes visible the heterogeneity of migrants' ties and allows the researcher to understand migrants' behaviour simultaneously from the viewpoints of sending and receiving countries.

The transnational turn has been most significant in shedding light on migrating families, on their complexity and on varying family practices. On the one hand, these practices constitute new attitudes and forms of behaviour that have a pragmatic base and can be considered adaptation strategies to the new life in migration. On the other hand, such practices are culturally embedded. They are a balancing act, a compromise between models exported from Poland and models prevalent in the receiving society. A transnational orientation is observed in various family practices: (1) rituals, traditions and religious holidays; (2) everyday contacts with family members by Skype and telephone; (3) visits back home (see, e.g. Bell 2016; Bell and Erdal 2015; Erdal 2014; Muszel 2013a; Muszel

2013b; Ryan 2011; Slany, Krzaklewska and Warat 2016; Ślusarczyk and Pustułka 2017; White 2017). Visits to Poland are usually a bustle of activity. They are not just for visiting family but also seeing dentists and doctors, beauticians, hairdressers and dressmakers, and sorting out official paperwork.

As discussed further in chapters 7 and 8, migrants also invite relatives to come and see how they live abroad, which can lead to their views changing after their return to Poland – their views about migration, about life in the destination country and about the world in general. Transnational life is often organised around children and, despite migration, children living abroad often form strong ties with grandparents, especially grandmothers (Slany and Strzemecka 2016, 2018).

Empirical evidence suggests that, typically, just as for Poles in Poland, family remains a very important value. Transnational families prioritise maintaining relationships across borders, and distance does not automatically decrease intimacy, but can even strengthen family feelings (Ślusarczyk and Pustułka 2017). Whether they have decided to settle abroad or say they wish to return sometime to Poland, family ties are kept alive and testify not only to family affection but also to a sense of continued responsibility.

It is impossible to generalise about gender relations within the hundreds of thousands of Polish families who have migrated since 2004. To some extent they are a microcosm of Polish families in Poland. However, it is safe to say that practices do change to some extent as a result of migration. According to a 2016 report, based mainly on the Transfam project, prepared by Pustułka (Slany, Pustułka and Ślusarczyk 2016) one can distinguish several different models of married and family life among Poles abroad. These reflect the fact that being abroad, for families of any nationality, tends to result in a myriad of different family practices and contexts for ‘doing family’ (Finch 2006). Pustułka creates her typology by focusing on several criteria: the type of gender relations in the family, attitudes to Polish identity, other important values imparted to children, socialisation practices and orientations towards return. Referring to these criteria, she identifies the following models: traditional, mixed and egalitarian. The most commonly chosen model can be defined as mixed; more seldom is an egalitarian model selected (Slany, Pustułka and Ślusarczyk 2016). The more patriarchal families were mostly likely to declare their intention to return to Poland, which, if it happened, would alter the balance still more in favour of Poles abroad adopting semi-egalitarian or egalitarian models.

A watershed for many couples is having a child abroad and the need to adopt various strategies for his or her upbringing, with regard to integration, language teaching, building a sense of ethnic identity and maintaining transnational ties. In some families there is opposition to the egalitarian ideas and practices common in receiving societies such as Norway, with a consequent deliberate focusing on traditional gender roles: mothers are carers and homemakers, and fathers are breadwinners (see, e.g. Małek 2011; Mazurkiewicz 2013; Muszel 2013a; Muszel 2013b; Pustułka and Trąbka 2017). Rather than the father taking on more responsibility for childcare, this role is often performed by 'flying grandmothers' (Bielecka-Prus, Czapka and Kawczyńska-Butrym 2018; Bjørnholt and Stefansen 2018). According to children interviewed in the Transfam project, in most households women still did most of the housework (Slany and Strzemecka 2016).

The extensive practice of traditional or mixed models may also reflect the social composition of migration to Norway after 2004, with many manual workers speaking little or no Norwegian or English and focusing on maintenance of a 'Polish' life-style (Guribye 2018). The more educated migrants who had found good jobs and had been in Norway for longer were more likely to practise an egalitarian model. However, all families were affected by requirements by Norwegian schools that both parents be involved – as it were, forcing partner-like practices. This is definitely a novelty for Polish parents used to a Polish context, where school and children are usually the wife's responsibility.

In many other families, Polish fathers do take on more caring roles than is likely to have been the case had they remained in Poland (Pustułka, Krzaklewska and Huang 2018). The Transfam research (Pustułka, Struzik and Ślusarczyk 2015) and the PAR Migration Navigator<sup>6</sup> (Żadkowska, Kosakowska-Berezecka and Ryndyk 2018), in particular indicate the importance of Norwegian institutional support and social expectations with regard to being a 'New [i.e. engaged] Father'. Because of the migration context, men have to redefine what fathering implies. Living in Norway, they cannot avoid finding out about active fatherhood and its manifestations – paternity leave, spending free time with children, less paid work, more free time for the family, negotiating care arrangements. However, since families also tend to maintain strong ties with Poland, Polish norms continue to exert an influence, especially the expectation that the man should be the chief breadwinner and should play a more passive role in the family. It seems that New Fathers often do not reflect deeply on their behaviour, but that New Fatherhood is a collection of practices

deriving from the specific sociocultural context and practical need to combine family and work responsibilities. The research shows, however, that there is an increase in active fathering, even if in many cases women continue to do the majority of the housework.

The structure and legal regulations governing the labour market in Norway also promote a work-life balance, which can help improve gender equality relations within the family. Families pay more attention to 'quality time' and pick up Norwegian habits of spending weekends together with their children in outdoor activities, whatever the weather (Slany and Strzemecka 2016, 270).

## 9. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed family practices and relations in Poland within the complex context of social change following the post-communist transformation. Migration has played a key role in this change. In the chapter, I have used a gender perspective to understand links between social change, migration and the mosaic of family life. I have shown, by identifying trends connected to the family sphere and family practices, and by discussing their various causes, that it is then possible to show how migration fits into this picture.

Research indicates irrefutably that family remains a very important value in Polish society and this is practically unchanged over the whole period 1990–2015. Various agencies of socialisation in Poland maintain its importance. Migrant families seem to be just as active as families in Poland in promoting such values. The Mother-Pole model continues to be integral to the identity of many Polish women, including migrants, despite a certain weakening and criticism of the model. It is demonstrated in the phenomenon of 'managerial matriarchy'. When mothers migrate alone, they manage to adhere to the model by rationalising their situation in various ways, creating an identity as a long-distance mother and organising care for children in Poland. Research also shows how stressful it can be to adhere to the model, both for women working in Poland and abroad. The model also to some extent penetrates families living abroad, as shown in the frequent practice of mixed and traditional gender roles. Despite the fact that most migrant women work and despite their important role in maintaining their families (the dual-earner income model), men are still widely regarded as breadwinners. The Transfam research in Norway, like the GEQ research in Poland, did not show much evidence that this gendered division of roles generated tension and conflicts.

However, there is also an increase in support for gender equality in Poland, at least on a declarative level, as well as more evidence of actual engaged fatherhood, particularly in cities and among better-educated, younger people. This is also noticeable among Poles abroad and, in receiving countries like Norway, which strongly promote gender equality, family life does become more egalitarian, with Polish families to some extent compelled to adjust their practices. Women become more positive about their position in the family and acquire a stronger sense of agency. Research (both in Poland and Norway) also shows a 'family turn', with increased understanding of the importance of devoting free time to children, particularly in active leisure pursuits and sport, and family holidays abroad. Although low income from wages abroad can make it difficult for migrants to avoid spending even more time at work than they did in Poland, it does seem possible for them to improve their work-life balance. This offers opportunities for poorer families that they may not have enjoyed in Poland.

Strong attachment to one's family and satisfaction with one's family life, evident in Polish survey data, is manifested in mutual support and solidarity both in Poland and among transnational families. In the latter case, other sources of support may be limited in scope. Families abroad practise and cultivate different types of Polish family-centred activities, and parents draw on help from their own parents in Poland, when they are healthy and active. Hence the extended family remains significant to Polish families, even though the number of extended family households is declining in Poland.

A basic Polish trend since the system transformation, shown in many studies, is the pluralisation of family types (more single-parent and single-person households, more cohabiting and homosexual couples) and a greater social acceptance of this phenomenon. Migration undoubtedly contributes to this trend of pluralisation by creating various kinds of transnational families, at different lifestyle stages. At the same time, there is a higher incidence of divorce in Poland. Particularly in the less Catholic, western parts of Poland, it is increasingly considered acceptable under certain conditions, despite the opposition of the Catholic Church. Marriages damaged by migration are probably more likely to end in divorce in regions where divorce is already more prevalent. On the whole, however, there is little evidence that migration on its own leads to marital breakdown; instead, it is more likely to exacerbate already existing strains.

Migration furthers processes of individualisation that are already marked in many spheres of Polish life. It helps women migrants enhance

their sense of individual agency and partly free themselves from social control and domestic violence at home.

Poland is experiencing a marked and intensifying process of population ageing, with implications for intergenerational caring responsibilities. This becomes even more significant as a result of the nuclearisation of families, the declining birth rate and, of course, mass migration. With increasing life expectancy, even children remaining in Poland will not be able to meet all the needs of parents who become seriously ill in later life. This prompts concern about who will be able to provide the necessary care. Both the Polish state and Poles living abroad, however, seem to devote insufficient attention to this matter. Krzyżowski (2013) suggests that for the time being migrants do generally manage to organise care successfully, although Kordasiewicz, Radziwinowiczówna and Kloc-Nowak (2018) also point to tensions between migrants and their siblings remaining in Poland. It is likely that increasing attention will be paid to developing state and private institutional care in Poland.

To conclude, migration exacerbates certain phenomena and processes and allows us to observe them more closely and see how they mutually influence each other and lead to further consequences. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, gender is constructed partly through the migration process. A gender lens is particularly helpful for analysing the interconnections examined in this chapter, and could also be applied more widely to studies of family life in Poland. Much still remains to be explored. It is hoped, however, that the chapter has opened the way for further sociological research and analysis.

## Notes

- 1 The projects were funded by the Polish-Norwegian Research Programme, operated by the National Centre for Research and Development under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and directed by myself at the Department of Population Studies, Jagiellonian University, Kraków.
- 2 [http://www.geq.socjologia.uj.edu.pl/en\\_GB/start](http://www.geq.socjologia.uj.edu.pl/en_GB/start).
- 3 [http://www.transfam.socjologia.uj.edu.pl/en\\_GB/](http://www.transfam.socjologia.uj.edu.pl/en_GB/).
- 4 The divorce rate is, however, still low in Poland compared with many European countries (GUS 2016, 474–6). In 1990, per 1,000 contracted marriages there were 166.2 divorces, and in 2015 this had risen to 356.4 (i.e., a nearly threefold increase). In Poland, a largely Catholic country, separation (a status officially recognised in 1998) is not a popular option; for instance, in 2015 there were only about 10 separations per year 1,000 contracted marriages.
- 5 Prognoza ludności na lata 2014–2050, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/prognoza-ludnosci-na-lata-2014-2050-opracowana-2014-r-,1,5.html>.
- 6 See [www.migrationnavigator.org](http://www.migrationnavigator.org) for more information.

# Lifestyles, livelihoods, networks and trust

ANNE WHITE

## 1. Introduction

Chapters 7 and 8 form a pair, exploring different social trends in Poland and considering how migration is one of a number of factors contributing to those trends. I take into account the varied nature of ‘migration’ and the different impact of migration on different subgroups of Polish society. The chapters consider both social remittances and indirect migration influences. The distinction between lifestyles and livelihoods (chapter 7) and culture and identity (chapter 8) is a pragmatic structuring device that accords with Portes’s (2010, 1542) suggestion, discussed in chapter 2, that ‘social structure’ and ‘culture’ are the core ‘elements of social life’ influenced by migration.

Changing lifestyles and livelihoods can signal changing social diversification and status hierarchies. They also reflect changing attitudes – rising aspirations not only for different forms of consumption but also for more individual autonomy and respect from others, including officials. Like chapter 6, however, chapter 7 also identifies important continuities, especially the still strong reliance by some sections of society on informal networks based on mutual trust.

The chapters are based largely on my interviews with stayers, including return migrants, as well as Polish sociological research. An important source is Arcimowicz, Bieńko and Łaciak (2015), a qualitative study of changing habits among 406 people of different social backgrounds in different parts of Poland. The authors found that most interviewees (three-quarters) praised certain aspects of life abroad, which they would



like to transfer to Poland. Travel and work abroad were influential in shaping such attitudes – even more than media influence. In particular, interviewees appreciated what they saw as more diverse food, more optimism and less complaining, more tolerance and better organisation (Łaciak 2015, 56–61). Arcimowicz, Bieńko and Łaciak also point out that Poles cannot simply be divided into two sorts, conservatives and advocates of change. Typically, each interviewee liked some foreign practices but rejected others. They conclude that ‘based on the narration of our respondents, one could place their habits [not them] in various points on the continuum’ between nationalism and cosmopolitanism (2015, 381).

This chapter touches on many of the practices identified by Arcimowicz, Bieńko and Łaciak’s interviewees, but it also sails into deeper waters, taking into account norms and values. I discuss the following specific trends: increased foreign travel; more ‘active ageing’; diversification of eating habits (as an example of changing consumption patterns); and increasing ‘civility’ and regard for legality, combined with somewhat increasing belief that ‘most people can be trusted’. I also explore counter-trends that can damage generalised trust: the continuing importance of informal practices and networks; and a rethinking of proximity and distance – where near seems far, and vice versa – which inhibits internal migration and contributes to a sense of disconnectedness from Poles elsewhere in Poland. These changing phenomena all link, with differing directness, to opportunity structures for changing lifestyles and livelihoods.

Migration contributes to all these trends by promoting more autonomy and choice for individual Poles. Bafoil (2009, 199) refers to ‘the high degree of individualisation consecutive upon the process of modernisation’ as a major trend in post-1989 CEE. It is hard to quarrel with this assertion when one considers how life has become less collectivised since communist party rule, although less clear is the extent to which individualisation has intensified since 2004. European Values Survey (EVS) data shows a 2.5 percentage point increase in Poles considering themselves to be ‘autonomous individuals’ between 2005 and 2012.<sup>1</sup> Garapich (2016c, 159) writes about an ‘emphasis on self-determination’ among migrants from Sokółka. He sees social networks in this part of rural north-east Poland as remaining strong; nonetheless, individuals value the sense of autonomy and agency endowed by migration. Leśniak-Moczuk (2015, 155) asserts that local people who have returned to south-east Poland from working in other parts of Poland or abroad, having been exposed to different values away from home, become more independent and individualistic; unlike Garapich, she believes they possess weaker social ties, contributing to the processes of individualisation in local villages. Con-

servative commentators such as Nowacki (2010, 9) tend to emphasise the weakening of social bonds as the significant aspect of individualisation; more liberal interpretations stress opportunities for individual agency. This was the viewpoint of Lucyna, a 36-year-old returnee from Ireland whom I interviewed in Wrocław:

Many people who aren't planted in one place don't have narrow views about society being uniform. That because I was brought up in this country I have to do the same as everyone else. Isn't that true? I'll follow the same path as the rest. No, the fact that you can simply have your own opinion, you should think things out for yourself, and so on, that's how it [working abroad] gave me so much. I really grew up.

In addition, migration contributes to social mobility not just by raising incomes for migrants and their families but also by promoting changing lifestyles. Gdula and Sadura (2012) and Goryszewski (2014) argue that, in contemporary Poland, lifestyle is an indicator of social class. Changing consumption patterns, therefore, which could also be interpreted as aspects of local migration cultures (Romaniszyn 2016, 162), can be seen as evidence of individuals rising socially by achieving lifestyles that would otherwise have been inaccessible. Material aspirations are rising generally in Poland (CBOS 2009, 16). Just a few years after EU accession, Domański (2006, 107) indicated that migration was feeding into this social trend. Choice of livelihoods, too, can be enhanced by migration, with rapidly forming migration networks creating opportunities to access labour markets across Europe. However, livelihood chances can also be damaged by pervasive social mistrust and informal practices, both of which, I argue, can be attributed partly to migration influences.

The return of any migrant changes the composition of their society of origin but does not necessarily add to the number of 'agents of change'. As discussed in chapters 3 and 4, sometimes returnees postpone trying to diffuse new ideas and practices because they do not think they will be adopted. Garapich (2016c) points out that resistance to social remittances is individualised, localised and context dependent. Grabowska, Garapich, et al. (2017, 135–6) describe this resistance in the following terms: 'Whether this is about transplanting forms of politeness, driving culture, acceptance of religious difference or homosexuality – in all these cases individuals carefully navigate between what they regard as normatively just and desirable and what they regard as possible to accept and implement in the locality of origin.' Locations in Poland are differently

receptive to the diffusion of social remittances, and impact is more visible in some locations than others. Some impacts, such as improved housing stock, are more visible in smaller locations. By contrast, the impact of some changing practices and ideas may be greater in cities because they can ripple out and spread in destinations that are already changing more for other reasons. Cities are simply more receptive to social remittances. In the end, deep social change comes with generational change: if, as a result of migration, younger people are changing, for example in being socialised by their parents to become more independent, then social remittances have a real impact.

Finally, while this chapter mostly presents trends as statistics, it uses qualitative data to explain those trends. It therefore presents interviewees' constructions of reality rather than 'hard facts'. Interviewees can express opposite reactions to the same or similar phenomena. Are British workers irresponsible and lazy compared to Poles, or healthily assertive vis-à-vis their employers? Is it good or bad if foreign parents neglect to wrap up children warmly when they go outdoors? Does smiling to strangers indicate kindness or hypocrisy?

## 2. Methodology and comments on studying small towns and rural areas compared with cities

Chapters 7–10 are based on all my Polish migration research projects; further detail about the methodology can be found in the publications referenced in table 7.1 below. In chapters 7–10, dates of interviews are mentioned for interviewees from Grajewo, Warsaw, Bath and Bristol because interviews in those locations were conducted in various years. For other locations, the dates of quoted interviews are as follows: Sanok (2008), Limanowa (2013), Wrocław, Łódź and Lublin (2016). My first three projects investigated labour markets, livelihood strategies and migration patterns in Poland, focusing mostly on small towns and surrounding rural areas, and using in-depth interviews to explore the views of stayers, including return migrants. I also commissioned an opinion poll that surveyed men and women in towns and villages across the Podkarpackie region (omitting the capital, Rzeszów) about their views on children's and parents' migration. It was while analysing this poll that I became curious about social remittance effects, since these seemed a possible explanation for the more radical, less gender-stereotyped responses given by returnees from the United Kingdom (White 2017, 91–2). Additional types of migration impact were revealed by my in-depth interviews,

**Table 7.1** Author's research projects, used for [chapters 7–10](#)

Project title	Methodology and sample size
'Polish families and migration since EU accession', 2006–9	Opinion poll (1,101 respondents), Podkarpacie, 2008. 115 in-depth interviews in Poland and UK: 82 in small towns in Poland (2007 Kłodawa, Gniezno, villages around Poznań (9); Suwałki and Elk (9); 2008 Grajewo (Podlasie) and Sanok (54); 2009 Grajewo (10)), 33 in Bath, Bristol, Frome and Trowbridge. The 102 interviewees were all working-class mothers, including 19 return migrants. 13 interviews were repeat interviews. (See <a href="#">White 2017</a> , 15–20 and appendices.)
'Polish double return migration', 2010–12	32 interviews with return migrants, 50:50 f/m, different ages, backgrounds, 20 in Poland (Warsaw, Poznań and Grajewo); 12 in UK (Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare). (See <a href="#">White 2014a</a> , 26.)
'Long-term unemployment and migration', 2013	36 interviews with unemployed people (28f/8m) including 18 return migrants in Limanowa (Małopolska). (See <a href="#">White 2016a</a> , 411.)
'The impact of migration on social change in Poland', 2015–16	46 interviews with 49 people (30f/19m, different ages and backgrounds) in 2015: Wrocław (4); and in 2016: Wrocław (20), Łódź (3), Warsaw (8) and Lublin (12), including 22 return migrants.

as well as by other types of ethnographic research – interviews at job centres, schools, newspaper offices and other local institutions; documentary and media analysis; walks around the fieldwork sites; and casual conversations with local residents. For example, it was only through such research that I could solve the puzzle, my main research question in 2006–9, of why so many Polish parents took their children to live with them abroad after 2004. In small towns where one-parent migration on a mass scale before 2004 had profound emotional impact, it was understandable that parents took advantage of new opportunities for family reunification abroad or migration all together.

I had complemented the interviews in Poland with some in the United Kingdom, with migrants from villages, towns and cities all over Poland, and with participant observation as a volunteer teacher of English to parents at Polish Saturday schools (continuing at the time of writing). For my second project, on return migration, I also included some interviews in the cities of Warsaw and Poznań. Conversations with Polish city dwellers piqued my curiosity about how, and the extent to which, migration patterns and impact really differed between cities and small towns. Polish scholarship had to date mostly focused on small towns (e.g. Cieślińska 1997; Osipowicz 2002; and Warsaw University Centre of Migration Research ethnoscapes). An exception is Gorzelak (2008a), *Polska lokalna 2007*, a study of Polish social change across a range of towns and cities, which frequently mentions migration in passing. My most recent research project (2015–6) therefore looked for evidence of migration's impact on social change in Polish cities, to understand how and why they might differ from small towns and villages. The project included mapping Polish trends through reading sociological literature, so I began the interviews with some sense of what to look for, although there were obviously far too many potential trends to discuss them all with everyone. Hence interviews were hardly structured, to give interviewees space to talk, and for me to find out what they considered important. Food and travel emerged as topics on which I gathered many comments, while other consumption practices such as cars and fashion, which do mark out social status in Poland (see, e.g. Goryszewski 2014), were not mentioned as frequently, so do not feature in the discussion below.

The overarching trend for households all over Poland to become immersed in transnational social fields was amply illustrated even in the largest and more prosperous cities such as Wrocław. In some cases, poorer city neighbourhoods constitute 'migration hotspots' – places with high volumes of migration where transnational social fields are very intense (White 2016d). Lucyna, a trainee probation officer, commented, 'There

are parts of the city where every family contains someone who has migrated (*wyjechał*) to England or who migrates (*jeździ*) to Germany, that's how they manage. . . . It's often their only survival strategy.' Jacek, between jobs and aged 28, reminisced, 'From those poorer families, the ones who always hung around in the playground, made trouble and so on, most [of my schoolfriends] went abroad. They had problems, debts, and from what I hear most of them are in England, in Holland, and they're probably settled there.'

Migration hotspots can also be found among certain social groups, irrespective of geographical location. For example, I found that English-language classes for retired people in Wrocław were full of parents of adult children abroad. Other hotspots are the Poland-based social networks of migrants who participated in the exodus of young Poles around 2004. Not everyone in cities is aware of these networks, but where networks still exist they can form intense transnational fields. Participants are no longer poor students, but working people in their thirties able to make frequent visits in either direction, keeping the networks alive. I found examples in both Poznań and Lublin. For instance:

The links have lasted for nearly 15 years . . . with the same intensity as when we were students together . . . I don't see any evidence that the ties are weaker, in any sense. . . . There is still the same intensity of interest in each other, in their relations, as when they were students. . . . It's kept up by mutual visits and taking part in the same events as they always did in Poland. For example, concerts together, bands, going to football matches together, going to pubs and clubs, and they have the money to do it. It's only 2–3 hours from Lublin to London. (Maryla, 39, Lublin, on her male university friends, some of whom emigrated c.2002)

Small transnational fields exist everywhere among family members of Polish migrants, even if those family members do not have many friends or neighbours living abroad. If the family members are on close terms with Polish migrants, these mini-fields can be central in their lives. For instance, when I asked Agata (Wrocław), a student whose father had been working in Germany for 12 years, how he had changed as a result, she said that whenever he returned he would continually be mentioning Germany in conversation and drawing comparisons. Stayers are inevitably forced to think about these comparisons, and those who visit friends and family abroad find themselves thinking in the same way. Iwona (Lublin), when asked how her everyday life was changed by having friends and family in

Italy, said, ‘How we remind each other, “But in Italy! It was like that! Do you remember?”’

### 3. The trend towards more foreign travel

One impact of migration is increased travel abroad, although naturally this has various causes. Poland had more open borders than other Soviet bloc countries (Stola 2010), but most Poles did not travel before 1989. In 1993, 51 per cent of Poles had never been abroad. By 2004, the figure had dropped to 39 per cent and by 2015 to 23 per cent. When asked in 2015 to name two main motives for going abroad, respondents mentioned holidays first, then work, then visiting family and friends, together with ‘rest and medical treatment’ (both at 17 per cent) (Boguszewski 2016). Foreign travel, therefore, represents an important new opportunity for many Poles since 1989, but especially since 2004.

Although not every Pole can afford to take a foreign holiday and stay in hotels, Poles of all social backgrounds visit family and friends. For example, in Bristol in 2009, Malwina (unemployed, married to a manual worker) described inviting a string of visitors from her small town near the Ukrainian border:

My sister and her husband have been twice, our friends have been, and now we have Mum. And we invite everybody who wants to come, let them come and see! They haven’t been abroad before, they didn’t have the opportunity, and now they have the chance to come and look. . . . They come just for a week or two. To see things, to go shopping.

In some cases, the holiday abroad functions as an ‘inspection visit’ that precedes migration, particularly for wives whose husbands work abroad. When they do not like what they see, it remains just a visit (White 2017). In other cases, family members come briefly to do paid work. In Wrocław, Marzena, from a nearby village, described how ‘many people from my family worked in England. I gave everyone who wanted the opportunity. They’ve all returned to Poland, but each came briefly to earn money and patch holes in the budget, as we say – buy a car, because my parents couldn’t afford that, mend the roof.’

Like the grandfather in the Allegro advertisement, more Poles have begun visiting adult children abroad. People over 55 are especially likely to mention visits to family and friends as motives for foreign travel

(Boguszewski 2016, 10). In 2009 only 7 per cent of Polish retired people said they travelled outside Poland, but by 2016 the figure was 22 per cent (Kolbowska 2009, 11; Omyła-Rudzka 2016a, 5). Grandparents I interviewed mentioned what a significant opportunity this had been. For example, in Wrocław, Ewa commented, 'We can get to see the world, learn English at first hand. . . . Otherwise I never would. Because we're not from such a rich family and aren't so well-off we could afford to go as tourists.'

Consistent with Grabowska, Garapich, et al.'s (2017) findings about the importance of reciprocity, my interviews suggested that the stayers who most benefit from visits and who are most likely to transmit new ideas and practices to Poland are those able also to contribute ideas and practices to the lives of children abroad.

I go to the USA, try to make Christmas into a Polish holiday, of course, all those seasonings, dried mushrooms, I bring with me. . . . There's a local Christmas tree, but obviously I bring our beautiful Polish baubles . . . We try to slightly exaggerate that Polishness, so they don't forget . . . about Poland. So they have the contact, so they think about it, that's the first thing. They are just symbols [but] I'm also encouraging them to buy some property in Wrocław to tie them even more to Poland. (Ewa)

In a similar case, Wanda (aged 63) described how interesting she found her visits to the United Kingdom, but also how she and her husband deliberately brought objects – including a tree – and ideas (e.g. about patterns of present giving to children), which Wanda saw as being more rational than those displayed by her British in-laws. They had created a savings fund for their grandson (aged one) so he could attend university in Poland. Conversely, other grandparents reported unhappy experiences of visiting abroad – they felt that their views were not wanted, and they were not impressed by what they saw. In one case, for example, a visiting Wrocław grandmother, with no English language, sat at home while her family was at school or work, in a US city where it was impossible to go anywhere without a car. Not only did she have no interactions with local people, but also she sensed that her family was not interested in her. When I spoke to her she had decided never to visit again. In other words, because social remitting was blocked in one direction (she could not bring anything to her US relatives), it seemed also to be blocked in the other (the United States had no influence on her).



## 4. Retired people's more active lifestyles

Attitudes in Poland are changing in favour of more active ways of spending retirement. Krzyżowski et al (2014, 158) identify a 'slow cultural and social change, including adoption of models of "active aging" from Western societies'. This involves moving away from the more passive model, where Poles 'construct their identities in conformity with their new status as pensioners and/or grandparents, channelling their spheres of activity into stereotypically defined and restricted areas (family, grandchildren, the problem of loneliness or fear of loneliness, religion, concentration on health problems)' (2014, 159). Unsurprisingly, the most active pensioners are urban, younger, richer and better educated (Krzyżowski et al. 2014; Omyła-Rudzka 2016a, 12). This is nothing new. Changes since the communist period should not be overstated: Poland was among the first countries to set up Universities of the Third Age, in the 1970s (Marecka-Drewniak 2015, 240), and other types of adult education and leisure activities existed both in interwar Poland and, under official auspices, in the communist period (White 1990).

Recent years, however, have witnessed greater activity among pensioners: 14 per cent of pensioners in 2016 were in adult education, compared with 3 per cent in 2009. More specifically, 9 per cent were studying foreign languages, compared with 4 per cent in 2009 (Omyła-Rudzka 2016a, 5; Kolbowska 2009, 11). Marecka-Drewniak (2015) and Korczewska (2015), writing about University of the Third Age language classes in Opole, note how some of the keenest participants were motivated by wanting to communicate with grandchildren abroad, including one woman who 'began to study for that reason even though she did not yet have grandchildren' (Marecka-Drewniak 2015, 242).

Celina, interviewed in Warsaw in 2016, said that when she returned in 2014 she had been struck by the numbers of older people taking exercise:

When I went to England as a young woman [in 2006] I saw many people riding bikes, running, older people, a lot of older people running or out walking. It was completely new because I never saw that in Poland. And from that point of view Poland has changed. Because there are lots of cyclists here, people jog, visit the gym, spend time in the fresh air, people do exercises, including older people, which didn't use to happen . . . Everything comes from abroad I suspect.

While not ‘everything’ comes from abroad, it is easy to see how retired stayers who visit abroad notice such differences. Ewa, already quoted above, whose daughter was a doctor in the United States, commented that

There is an 85-year-old lady who works twice a week at the hospital information desk as a volunteer. Very well-dressed. It’s really good. I think that will come to Poland too because being active is very important for older people, to be with other people, to do something . . . I notice more consciousness about keeping fit.

Since, as mentioned in the previous section, stayers from all backgrounds visit migrants abroad, migration can be a ‘leveller’ also in this respect. Eliza, interviewed in Grajewo in 2012, from a poor household, told the story of her mother who had visited her in Madrid. At first she had been too shy to venture outside the flat, but then she had taken part in keep-fit classes in a local park and lost weight. Nonetheless, the impact of migration on lifestyles is probably more substantial in cities. City pensioners can enact changes in the context of the city, for example by buying foreign food products for which they develop a taste abroad, or by engaging in particular leisure pursuits, or simply by feeling justified in spending time enjoying themselves. In contrast, a grandparent who returns to a Polish village may have fewer opportunities. For example, Marzena (Wrocław) pointed out:

There are such big differences between older people in the UK and in our village. Even the pension is so tiny they don’t have money for hobbies. And they don’t have any such expectations. They’re just absorbed in growing food, having enough money to pay the bills, planting their gardens so everything grows in time. They keep asking me, ‘Have you done your cucumbers and tomatoes?’ . . . and they pickle vegetables for a rainy day.

## 5. Changing eating habits

Arcimowicz, Bieńko and Łaciak provide examples of Poles from all locations, including villages, expressing curiosity about new types of food, and a willingness to experiment, although they also found that ‘the smaller the location, the less people were able to name particular dishes which they would like to try’ (2015, 177). There was also a strong attachment among all interviewees to dishes they had eaten since childhood, and

which were considered 'Polish' despite their in some cases communist-era origins (e.g. tomato soup). Domański et al. (2015), in their quantitative study of eating patterns, accentuate rather that Poles are still quite conservative, although they also state that more highly educated Poles are more experimental (2015, 184).

Changing eating habits can be explained by many factors: lifestyles, especially longer working days; more disposable income for many Poles; the availability of new foods in shops and eating places, especially in cities; advertising; televised cookery programmes; the Internet; holidays abroad. However, migration also plays a role. Main (2016b, 154) suggests that experimentation abroad often results from an interest in food rather than from curiosity about cultural difference, which seems plausible. Hence this topic is discussed in [chapter 7](#) rather than [chapter 8](#), although motivations can overlap.

It is not just richer and better-educated migrants or their stayer visitors who pick up new tastes abroad. The ability to buy unusual foodstuffs and eat out in Poland depends on income and place of residence, but new tastes resulting from migration do not have to be extravagant. For example, Andrzej, a librarian and return migrant from France to Lublin, reported that he and his wife, who had worked in Italy, having acquired a taste for lighter food, fed their children more vegetables and less meat and potatoes than their more typically Polish extended family. Izabela, a shop assistant whose husband had been a chef in Ireland, described how he made spaghetti carbonara after the family returned to Wrocław. Stayers also eat more exotic types of foreign food because they are supplied by relatives working abroad. Iwona, a psychologist who had lived and worked all her life in Lublin, nonetheless spent much time socialising with her Italian relatives and friends and reported on her changing eating habits:

ANNE: Now you have these Italian ties, do you feel your life has changed on a daily basis?

IWONA: [Thinks for a moment] Perhaps a bit. Perhaps even concerning taste in food. We know what genuine, good pizza tastes like; in Poland it's not the same taste, but my sister-in-law brings us good seasonings, we've learned to eat dried ham, so those tastes have been transferred to our everyday lives.

The following two quotations illustrate how stayers with relatives working abroad acquire tastes for foreign food. In the first instance the interviewed stayer failed in 'diffusing' these new tastes to other members of the family; in the second, she succeeded.

[When I visit my Polish godmother on the western border of Germany] I love going to France for cheese . . . I mean mouldy cheese. . . . Once we were bringing some back in the car and it made such a stink – it was all runny – so you couldn't breathe in the car. . . . We travelled for half an hour, but granddad said, 'Throw it out', and that cheese just went in the bin. (Maja, aged 20, student from X [town with population 60,000], interviewed in Wrocław)

My [elder] son always brings prawns [from Portugal to Poland] as well as Serrano ham, he brings chorizo sausage, he brings such a lot, more or less it's just me who eats it [not my husband and younger son]. Olives. I used to hate olives. . . . He said I should try . . . and from then on I've adored them and even more, since you can add different things to salads, for my family, I began, you know, so it wasn't perceptible, cutting up olives in tiny pieces. 'Mummy, what did you add to the salad? It tastes nice.' Next time I added a bit more. And now they eat olives. You have to be cunning (*Trzeba tak pokombinować*). (Beata, Wrocław, retired economist)

Polish return migrants can diffuse social remittances by opening restaurants serving non-Polish food:

MAGDA: Somewhere in the city I recently saw a 'Masala Express: Indian Takeaway'. A takeaway in Łódź?? It seems a couple had returned after about ten years, and decided to set up an Indian takeaway.

ANNE: I wonder if people go there because they got a taste for Indian food abroad.

MAGDA: That's exactly why I went [to the restaurant] . . .  
[Slightly later in the interview:]

MAGDA: They wanted to show people that doing something different can be a good idea. You don't have to sit at home and eat dumplings.

Magda, having lived with an Indian housemate in the United Kingdom, had had a thorough exposure to Indian food, so she had already 'acquired' this social remittance, but she was able to put it into practice and therefore consolidate it by visits to the restaurant in Poland.

## 6. Civility, legal consciousness and trust

If life is becoming easier for many Poles, this is partly related to more predictability and pleasanter experiences when dealing with officials, and better overall customer service (cf. [chapter 4](#)). Arcimowicz (2015, 252–8) describes a related process of ‘Americanisation’ of office management. There is also more respect for legality and less corruption,<sup>2</sup> and a generally stronger feeling of agency among ordinary citizens than under communist party rule. Higher expectations of honesty and polite and responsible behaviour from strangers can be witnessed, especially compared with the ‘wild capitalism’ of the early 1990s, and this is in accordance with the theory that ‘generalised trust flourishes in democracies’ ([Uslaner 1999](#), 123). Growing wealth in Poland is also important, since poor societies everywhere are often less trusting; for example, Portugal shows similarly low levels of trust to most countries in CEE, compared with richer north-western Europe ([Sztabiński and Sztabiński 2014](#)). However, there are strong countercurrents. Many varieties of informal practice are still rife, both among individuals and employers, with an increase in precarious work ([Boulhol 2014](#)). Poles remain generally sceptical about improvements in trustworthiness. In 2014, for example, Poles were much more likely to think that Poles were less honest than they had been in 1989, with 47 per cent believing they were more dishonest, and only 14 per cent they were more honest ([Boguszewski 2014a](#), 93).

Surveys suggest that in specific respects Poles are overcoming communist legacies of evading the law. Kubal (2012), in her study of ‘socio-legal integration’ among Poles in the United Kingdom, concludes that to some extent respect for the law is enhanced there, and that Poles return to Poland more convinced that law-abiding behaviour makes sense. For example, Poles increasingly disapprove of motorists speeding ([Boguszewski 2013b](#), 6). This could be linked to many factors, such as road safety campaigns, but Kubal (2012, 2015), Galent, Goddeeris and Niedźwiedzki (2009, 60) and Garapich (2016b) all agree that the habit of safer driving does constitute a social remittance.<sup>3</sup> Garapich reports that,

according to many respondents, this [safer driving] is the main thing that Poles ought to bring from Britain. . . . Migrants very often emphasise that it seems things in that domain are changing in Poland and that their (migrants’) attitudes may be playing a part in that process. This is of course very difficult to determine, but the very fact that migrants are so eager to stress the difference and then argue

that change in Poland is highly necessary and is slowly happening, suggests that they are implicit agents in that process, albeit met with strong resistance.

He quotes an interviewee who had returned from London and constantly argues with his friend in Sokółka over the latter's refusal to wear a seat belt (2016b, 163–4).

Improved health and safety in work settings, implying more sense of responsibility towards the public, is also a sphere in which progress stems largely from enactment and enforcement of regulations, but also depends for success on cultural change. Such change can sometimes result from migration experience. For example, Leszek, a 33-year-old return migrant interviewed in Wrocław, observed:

In Poland a builder is normally expected to do everything. He has to do the wiring, put in the pipes, deal with the plumbing. Generally the whole lot . . . I liked it better in London because you didn't feel pressurised to do different things. I came and painted the walls, that was my job. I had to plaster and paint, and then the plumber and electrician would come and do their bit. . . . Although slowly things are changing in Poland . . . I think it's because there's more emphasis on health and safety.

Eugeniusz, a Grajewan forester, who had also been a construction worker, remarked that:

When I was in Germany I got to know the technology, how work was organised. I brought those things back to Poland. . . . A few friends had [also] been able to work in German forests back then. And when they returned to Poland they worked for me. So I had enough experienced and useful people. . . . People who knew what they were doing. They knew how to be careful. Working in Poland, it was the same. None of us, I or any of my employees, ever had an accident.

Eugeniusz backed up his account with a story about working for a Polish construction company in Białystok which made balconies not fit to carry weight. 'That's Polish mentality. You can't imagine it happening abroad. I learned a lot. Taking a more responsible approach to things.'

Many of my interviewees in Poland and the United Kingdom, as well as Poles quoted by other scholars (e.g. [Burrell 2011a](#), 1026; [Galaśińska 2010b](#), 315), expressed the wish that in Poland people would behave in a

friendlier and often, by extension, more helpful and socially responsible way towards strangers and subordinates. This relates partly to customer service and more transparency and civility in workplaces, but mostly to behaviour on the street – smiling and offering help – which is connected to trust in strangers. Iwona (Bristol, 2009, from Warsaw) made a typical observation: ‘Have you noticed that if you go somewhere where Poles are sitting they don’t smile? When you were in our [Polish] club, the women weren’t smiling? Only English women smile! In the UK, when people go somewhere where children are playing, they smile.’ Grabowska, Garapich, et al. (2017, 122) recount the story of a migrant to London who, on a visit home to a local government office in Sokółka, ‘started to count people who smiled on entering the place with predictable outcome: one in ten smiling’. In other cases the impression of more goodwill abroad may simply reflect moving from a busy city in Poland to a smaller place abroad; the comparison is nonetheless framed as between a friendly foreign country and unfriendly Poland. For example, Edyta, who had moved from Wrocław to Bath and whom I interviewed in 2009, commented, ‘In general, people are friendlier. . . . In Poland they are run off their feet, they are hostile [‘look at each other like wolves’] because they never have enough time. But here somehow life is more peaceful.’

As illustrated in the following two quotations, some interviewees suggest that Poland could not become more relaxed; others assert that attitudes are already being transferred:

Everyone [in Germany] was more helpful, more willing and quicker to help. I remember there was a situation where I was cycling to the [village] shop and my chain fell off and I couldn’t fix it. And a man at once asked me what had happened, and I said the chain had fallen off, and he helped me. I think that in Poland a couple of people would have to come by before maybe one of them – but he was the first person I met. . . . It’s simply a different culture. Germans are simply more open, Poles are more closed. (Oliwia, Lublin)

Later in the interview, I hazarded the idea that ‘life is changing in Poland’, but Oliwia retorted that ‘perhaps it’s changing on television’. In contrast, Marta, a returnee from Ireland (interviewed in English), commented in 2011 that she had noticed Warsaw society becoming more trustful and helpful as a result of migration:<sup>4</sup>

The culture is different, people are more friendly in Ireland, they are open, they talk to you on the street, the bus stop and everywhere.

Here, people are more reserved and not so helpful. . . . [However,] I think that in Warsaw people are more friendly [than in other parts of Poland] because there are many young people who are not like that who know how it is like to be abroad and they bring some good types of behaviour from there.

Marta's impressions of the contrast between Ireland and Poland are not unique. Only 9 per cent of Polish respondents chose answers at the 'helpful' end of the scale (points 7–10) in reply to the 2004 European Social Survey question, 'Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?' This compared with 54 per cent of respondents in Ireland. By 2014, the figure for Poland demonstrated a slight increase in expectations of helpfulness, up to 13 per cent (Czapiński 2007, 259; Czapiński 2015b, 334).<sup>5</sup>

Failure to smile is just the tip of the iceberg, according to many interviewees. It signals a wider base of reproving attitudes, distrust and hostility between Poles. On the one hand, it links to a generally less relaxed atmosphere said to prevail in Poland. For example, Sławomir, a 60-year-old pensioner from Warsaw with two children living abroad, suggested in 2016:

We're too up-tight (*szttywno*) in Poland . . . Maybe a bit less now because we have lots of contact with abroad, on television, people behave more naturally. In Poland they're always saying, 'Don't!' (*Nie wypada!*). But now there are lots of things in Poland because of those foreign contacts, going abroad people see what it's like in foreign countries and they imitate it.

More seriously, failure to smile is interpreted as mistrust. Poles notice and comment upon examples of trustfulness by foreigners, but sometimes only to say how unsuitable this behaviour would be in Poland. For example, interviewees in my own and other projects (e.g. Grabowska, Garapich, et al. 2017, 114; Galent, Goddeeris and Niedźwiedzki 2009, 118–19) have mentioned west European householders' readiness to trust their house keys to Polish cleaners and builders. Both Kubal (2015, 77) and I heard surprised comments about Norwegians not locking their cars.

Levels of trust remain low in Poland. To some extent this is a legacy from the communist period (Sztompka 1999), but it is also connected to lower levels of prosperity and social cohesion in CEE than in the West. However, polls in Poland since EU accession mostly show rising levels of generalised trust.<sup>6</sup> In 1994, 8 per cent of Poles believed that 'generally



speaking, you can trust most people' (Sztompka 1999, 170). By 2004 the number had risen to 17 per cent, and by 2008–10 there had been a sharp rise, to 26 per cent, thereafter falling back slightly to 23 per cent in 2016. Trust specifically in strangers, however, was fairly constant (with 32–35 per cent trusting strangers to some extent) throughout the period from 2004 (Omyła-Rudzka 2016b, 2–3). The rising CBOS figures are similar to those in World Values Survey Polish data for 2005 and 2012 (WVS). A one-off and much larger GUS survey on social cohesion (GUS 2015b) showed trust in strangers slightly higher, at 39 per cent.<sup>7</sup>

Since trust is correlated with prosperity and higher levels of education, it is not surprising to find it rising, at least somewhat, after 2004. This was a time when incomes were rising fast for many Poles, income inequality was declining, general life satisfaction was increasing and more Poles were acquiring university degrees. However, of course there remain many poor and less well-educated people. There is also an almost<sup>8</sup> direct correlation between trust and size of place of residence, with villages the least trusting and the big cities the most (Omyła-Rudzka 2016b, 6). I interviewed some highly mistrustful stayers in the small towns of Sanok, Grajewo and Limanowa. Usually tales of cheating locally referred to employers failing to pay their workers, for example as cleaners or builders, although very occasionally a wider generalisation was made about 'Poles'. In Grajewo in 2008, for example, Bogusława explained the poverty of a relative who was a car repair mechanic as follows (translated literally): 'Our people, the Poles, are conmen (*kombinatorzy*). They take the car and promise to pay tomorrow, but they don't.'

Trust is important for migrants, especially non-professionals who depend heavily on informal networks both to migrate and also to operate abroad. However, disentangling how migration affects overall levels of trust in Poland is complex, since competing influences are at play. Migrants often need to be trusting, if they rely on co-ethnics abroad, so migration may strengthen particularised trust, when networks are used successfully. On the other hand, migration can promote mistrust. Sometimes this has a basis in fact: betrayal by previously trusted personal contacts. However, probably more important in forming generalised distrust is the prevalent discourse about the need to be careful when accessing the precious resource of help from fellow Poles. A discourse of hostility among Poles abroad – relating to Poles other than family and close friends – is documented by numerous scholars writing about Polish networks (e.g. Garapich 2016c; Gill 2010; Grzymała-Kazłowska 2005; Krasnodębska 2012; Piętka 2011, 149; Ryan 2010; White and Ryan 2008; White 2017, 185–8).

Some migrants base their mistrust on experience of types of work where undercutting and sharp practices are prevalent, such as construction and seasonal agricultural work, particularly in the shadow economy; conversely, some educational and professional migrants may never encounter the discourse.<sup>9</sup> However, judging from the number of times interviewees volunteered such opinions (for which I never ‘fished’), mistrust seems widespread even among those who have not had bad experiences of their own.

Distrust is encapsulated in the saying, ‘Poles behave like wolves towards other Poles’ (*Polak Polakowi wilkiem*), referred to indirectly by Edyta above. Garapich (2016c, 243) writes that he lost count of the number of times Polish journalists asked him to comment on this proverb. He refers to the ‘myth of the Polish conman’ (2016c, 241–51), although the problem is often framed as being one of envious malevolence, not cheating. For example, I was told by a Pole in the United Kingdom that it must have been his Polish neighbours who slandered him to the tax authorities, because only Poles would be envious enough to do this.

Poles who go abroad without having had much contact with Polish migrants in advance, for example because they lived in Polish cities, may be generally mistrustful before leaving Poland, but nonetheless only become aware abroad of the opinion that Poles are dangerous to know. Malwina, interviewed in Wrocław, commented on how, after they arrived, ‘our [Polish London] friends said a Pole would drown another Pole in a spoonful of water, to stop him being better’.<sup>10</sup> The power of the myth is illustrated by the fact that young people from well-off backgrounds who go abroad, being apparently quite trusting, can become less so. For example, Jacek, aged 28, from Wrocław, expatiated on hostile discourse among Poles in Norway, and then described how his Norwegian employer asked him to recommend a Polish friend for a job. Jacek decided he would not, on the supposition – not backed with evidence – that a Pole might be unreliable. He concluded that the myth ‘did play a bit of a role’ in influencing his behaviour.

Stayers who live in strong transnational social fields in Poland, and feel migration savvy, can imbibe the assumption that Polish migrants are wolves merely by living in Poland – even in Warsaw, with its high levels of generalised trust. Grzegorz, a student aged 21, had been socialised by his older relatives in London:

Lots of people complain it’s best for Poles abroad to avoid other Poles. In fact you can see it in Poland too. A Pole always wants to do

down other Poles. . . . I've lived here [in Poland] quite a while and really, people aren't nice in Poland. People are envious, they just love to make life hard for others.

These discourses especially circulate in locations where many people migrate, and can be said to constitute part of the migration culture. Even people with limited personal transnational networks believe the myth. For instance, Grażyna, a 39-year-old kitchen help from Sanok with no migration experience, commented, 'Polish people, sometimes, well, as they say, it can be better to be among foreigners. Because a Pole could be out to get you because he says "You're earning more money and I'm getting worse money and you only just came."' In an interesting parallel, Krasnodębska (2012, 129) illustrates how women from Silesia are upset to find a lack of specifically Silesian co-ethnic solidarity. One of her interviewees lamented: 'Most of all I was pained by the lack of solidarity among Silesians . . . If I hadn't seen for myself how people change abroad, I'd never have believed it.'

There seems to be circular causation: migrants bring generalised mistrust from Poland; this becomes more specific abroad because of the discourse – not necessarily backed up by first-hand experience – of wolfish Poles; and, through their negative reports back to stayers, migrants reinforce mistrust of Polish strangers in Poland. However, it is also important to note that, judging from my own interviews, small towns are already full of stories of cheating foreign employers and recruiting agents. These feed into overall mistrust of strangers, of whatever nationality.

## 7. Informal networks, social capital and transnational labour markets

The reverse side of not trusting strangers is placing considerable trust in friends and family – typical of the communist era (Sztompka 1999; Wedel 1986) but still persisting in many CEE countries, including Poland. On the one hand, nepotism is condemned; indeed, belief that you can only access jobs through contacts is a major cause for migration from Poland by people lacking requisite social capital (Strzelecki et al. 2015, 148; White 2016a). Ruskowski's (2012) study suggests how widespread the practice remains, although CBOS surveys show decreasing public belief that contacts and patronage are very important for success at work (Głowacki 2017a, 2).<sup>11</sup> Paradoxically, it is quite acceptable, indeed routine, to use social capital to migrate, including fixing up jobs abroad. Garapich found

that Poles in London predominantly relied on friends and family to access work (2016c, 220), and Trevena, McGhee and Heath (2013), as well as White (2017), in our studies of various UK localities, found that most interviewees had used informal networks to migrate. Employers connive at this, by asking CEE migrants to recommend friends as potential employees (Findlay and McCollum 2013).

Belief in the importance of transnational migration networks is strong within the Polish population abroad, where migrants encourage, tempt, invite, persuade and eventually ‘pull’ (*ściągać*) stayers to join them. However, they are more likely to behave in this way in certain Polish locations. Reliance on informal networks typifies small towns with strong migration cultures, but seems less prevalent in big cities. Use of migration recruitment agencies more than doubled across Poland over the years 2004–6, with significant regional variation, being lowest in Podlasie, a region with a strong migration tradition (Anon. 2008). Jaźwińska (2001, 124) comments, ‘In some regions migration capital has been amassed over decades, in others (such as Warsaw) migration capital is acquired quickly, thanks to easy access to knowledge and information.’ My interviews in Warsaw and Wrocław uncovered cases of young people who had gone abroad around 2004 *w ciemno*, ‘into the dark’, with nothing fixed in advance, showing considerable self-confidence – perhaps justified by their cultural and economic capital. This would seem foolhardy to many inhabitants of small towns, where use of social capital to migrate is more or less obligatory. On the other hand, as the trend mentioned above suggests, this culture is changing. This happens as migrants become more familiar with using agencies; I found some examples in my 2007–9 research. Overall, migration culture is the part of Polish culture most susceptible to migration influences, and it clearly has been changing since 2004. The impact on trust is a secondary effect of this.

Even stayers who live less intensively within transnational social space still access their transnational networks as social capital, to obtain certain resources, as in the following case of a 36-year-old lecturer from Lublin – a situation which, incidentally, is hard to imagine being mentioned by a Western stayer.

ANNE: Has your own life has been affected by the fact that so many people have been migrating from Poland?

BARTOSZ: Not negatively. But positively, yes, because, knowing that some friends are in Scotland, someone’s in England, someone’s in Berlin, and in southern Germany, in Italy, so if I need to buy some materials for work, books or something, or my wife wants

some make-up or medicines, which we couldn't get in Poland . . . it makes things much easier. Building a network of contacts makes things much easier.

As mentioned in [chapter 3](#), Kapur (2010, 14) argues that migration impact partly happens through a *prospect* channel, where the hope of future migration shapes stayers' behaviour. Stayers in locations like Limanowa, Grajewo or Sokółka can reasonably expect to find a job in Oslo, Madrid or London with help from fellow townspeople based in those locations abroad. Hence one impact of migration on such towns is that the 'local' labour market is viewed by ordinary people (but not in official documentation)<sup>12</sup> as also existing abroad – in many cases, extending across multiple foreign locations.

ANNE: How did you find your work in Sweden?

JAN: [teasingly] Overall, in Limanowa [registered unemployment 18 per cent] it's not hard to find work.

[dramatic pause]

ANNE: Abroad?

JAN: That's right . . . If people like you, and you have the right contacts, you just need to ask someone and they'll set up that work for you. I come from X [a nearby village] and that whole area is one where people go to Sweden. I just talked to people and somehow they fixed me up.

## 8. Internal migration, proximity and distance

Later in the interview just quoted, Jan observed: 'We stick in one place in Poland, but look for jobs all over the world.' The corollary of dense international networks is weak networks within Poland, and this helps explain why internal migration is quite limited. Polish young people who grow up outside university cities often migrate to study, and sometimes stay in the city after graduation, especially Warsaw and Kraków ([Herbst 2012](#), 136–66), but other types of internal migration are not very common. Statistics are unreliable because Poles often fail to register moves from one place of residence to another, but survey evidence confirms that internal migration is indeed rather low. In 2011, for example, according to the census, 56.5 per cent of Poles lived in their birthplace ([Anacka 2016](#), 213). Only about one-fifth had moved more than once during their adult life, not usually for work ([Kowalczyk 2010](#)). The period after EU accession has not

been characterised by more internal migration; overall it decreased slightly from the 1990s to the following decade (GUS 2016, 398). Although there are practical reasons not to move, most importantly the small size of the rented accommodation sector (Anacka 2016, 215) and its cost, there seems to be some cultural inhibition against migration to Polish cities (Iglicka 2008, 65; White 2017, 54–6). There are a few signs of change very recently, with increased migration to a few flourishing cities and sea-side towns (GUS 2007, 433; 2016, 415).<sup>13</sup> Like other urban hubs in CEE (Stanilov and Sýkora 2014), the most successful Polish cities have begun to suburbanise rapidly (Kajdaneck 2011; Zborowski, Soja and Łobodzińska 2012), with new housing estates springing up, largely thanks to the much greater availability of mortgages (Kisiel 2010), though also sometimes thanks to money earned abroad (White 2016d).<sup>14</sup>

The relationship between internal and international migration is complex: sometimes the one seems to feed the other, but in other places, at other times, they are mutually exclusive (King and Skeldon 2010). Okólski (2012) argues that international migration was favoured after 2004 because foreign labour markets could absorb surplus labour in provincial Poland. However, intense international migration over the past 10 years can in itself be seen as a factor inhibiting internal migration. Stayers living in Polish locations without long migration traditions, who have begun to live in transnational social space, reverse their understandings of proximity and distance. This had already happened in locations that became dominated by out-migration in the 1990s, for example when buses started going directly from north-east Poland to Brussels (Łukowski 1998, 147). Emotional lives based on informal networks straddle the local area and places abroad; Staszyńska and Bojar, for example, found that migrant households in small towns as early as 2007 were more likely to have computers, to keep in touch with relatives abroad (2008, 26). In such households, other locations in Poland seem less important. Previously, flights and visas had been obtainable only in Warsaw, which was ‘the contact point with places abroad’ in the communist period (Jaźwińska, Łukowski and Okólski 1997, 24); now even the tiniest village is a contact point.

There seems to be a shortage of statistical information about such preferences, but one can infer that they are increasing. Table 7.2 shows the situation in 2007, when a preference for international over internal migration was already noticeable for Poland as a whole, but particularly in regions with the highest international migration. Exceptions to this rule are places within easy distance of dynamic cities. My interviewees in Lublin often mentioned that migration was to Warsaw *and* abroad. This is

**Table 7.2** Percentage of Poles from different regions claiming that ‘in order to obtain a job or change their job for a better-paid one’, they would be inclined to move in Poland or abroad

Region of current residence	Would move to another place in Poland	Would move abroad
Łódź region	24.9	24.2
Lublin region	29.3	29.2
Małopolska region	19.2	31.0
Opole region	25.8	32.1
Podkarpacie region	23.4	33.3
Polish national average	25.5	28.3

Source: Feliksiak 2008b,123.

reflected in [table 7.2](#), which shows that inhabitants of Łódź and Lublin regions, with relatively good connections to Warsaw, were untypically, and marginally, more likely to prefer moving within Poland.

One can guess that 10 years later, when international migration is commonplace from all regions, international migration networks have expanded and there has been such marked family reunification for settlement abroad, the gap will have widened in favour of moving abroad.

My own interviewees frequently listed numerous obstacles to internal migration. For example, in Grajewo in 2012, Iwona commented: ‘I don’t have any possibility of moving somewhere else [in Poland], without work, without contacts. There’s no possibility even if you wanted to. Where would you go? Even Warsaw. The prices are extraordinary.’ Rosalia explained:

My husband and I were thinking about moving somewhere else, but we came to the conclusion that either we would stay in Sanok or, if we moved, it would be to somewhere abroad. Because if you move somewhere else in Poland, all the same, everything will be foreign/strange [*obce*]. Strange people, strange places.

Going abroad seems more natural than moving within Poland: some interviewees appeared not even to consider the latter alternative. For example, Dorota reported, ‘I looked for work for three months . . . in Lublin. I didn’t think of going outside Lublin. Somehow. I was born and brought up in Lublin. And my [woman]friend had gone to England as soon as she graduated. And she simply got me to join her.’ In 2012 I had the following

conversation with Ryszard, aged 56, unemployed in Grajewo, whose sister lived in Warsaw:

ANNE: But don't you want to go to Warsaw?

RYSZARD: Me? No, I don't like cities. . . . Why should I seek my fortune in other towns? If my sister would come back here and live [to mind my flat] I would feel comfortable about going to Holland.

Kubicki (2015, 85–88), basing his assertion on a local study, suggests that Poles identify with their locality – a personal home area (*ojczyzna prywatna*) consisting of local environs, the commune (*gmina*) or at most the county (*powiat*), rather than with the region (*województwo*) or the Polish state, which is seen as 'foreign and dysfunctional'. In post-Solidarity Poland, the issue of how and why Poland is divided – often framed as whether Poland is 'one' or 'many' – has been a frequent preoccupation of sociologists (e.g. [Kojder 2007](#); [Rychard, Domański and Śpiewak 2006](#); [Zarycki 2014](#)) as well as politicians. Poland today is often claimed to be particularly polarised. According to survey evidence, only 14 per cent of Poles claim that Poles are more united than divided ([Badora 2013](#), 11).<sup>15</sup> Geographical disconnectedness within Poland, a sense of proximity to points abroad and a refusal to contemplate internal migration might be feeding into this perception, though of course polarisation has many complex causes.

## 9. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed some changing practices and beliefs in contemporary Poland, summarised in [table 7.3](#). Such changes linked to deeper social phenomena such as formalisation and individualisation, trust and social capital, and changing aspirations and conceptualisations of proximity and distance in a globalising world. I discussed different types of endogenous reasons why these trends might be occurring; for example, worries about high rents discourage migration to Polish cities, more diverse public eating places in towns and cities change eating habits, and more prosperity leads to greater trust. I also showed how migration both contributes to these factors – for example, more money from migration means more prosperity and supports increasing levels of generalised trust – but also constitutes an alternative and, in some cases, complementary and perhaps more important explanation. For instance, people are discouraged from migrating to Polish cities because they believe they are



**Table 7.3** Trends discussed in [chapter 7](#), selected types of factor contributing to each trend, and connected migration-related influences

Trend	Type of factor (general) Excludes other types of factor that also feed into the trend	Contributory migration-related factor Excludes other specific factors not related to migration
Individualisation, in sense of individuals' increased sense of autonomy and self-determination.	Experiences that develop self-confidence.	Confidence and self-determination acquired from living and visiting abroad.
Rising material aspirations.	More opportunities to see living standards abroad.	Life abroad, visits to migrants abroad.
Lifestyles: more travel abroad.	More opportunities to travel.	Stayers invited to visit family and friends abroad.
Lifestyles: more active ageing (exercise etc.).	Imitation.	Migrants and visitors return to Poland inspired to be active.
Lifestyles: more pensioners in adult education.	Practical need for additional education.	Parents with adult children abroad need to learn foreign languages.
Lifestyles: more adventurous eating habits.	Imitation.	Poles try out and develop curiosity about new food abroad. Migrants send foreign food to friends and family in Poland. Return migrants open restaurants serving foreign food.
Norms: more civility and respect for law expressed in more careful driving and concern for health and safety.	Imitation.	Experience of being drivers, pedestrians and workers abroad.

More civility in public places and on the street.	Imitation.	Experience of being smiled at and helped by strangers abroad.
Spreading (though still limited) belief that 'most people can be trusted'.	Prosperity.	Migration earnings.
Spreading (though still limited) belief that 'most people can be trusted'.	Positive experiences of trust being rewarded.	Good experiences with using migrant networks and agencies (the latter a product of changing migration cultures – ways of doing migration).
Continuing low levels of trust in strangers.	Negative experiences of trust being betrayed.	Poor experiences with using migrant networks and agencies.
Continuing low levels of trust in strangers.	Stereotypes that Polish strangers are envious and unhelpful.	Discourse of hostility re. Polish migrants circulating between Poland and migrant milieus abroad.
Livelihoods: Continuation of informal practices.	Acquiring jobs through contacts.	Using migration networks to access work abroad.
Livelihoods: internal migration low and even decreasing.	International destinations more attractive.	Poles in Poland feel confident and enthusiastic about international migration because they know Polish migrants abroad.
Poles do not feel united as a nation.	Many Poles have little to do with Poles elsewhere in Poland.	Poles in Poland live in transnational social fields; their thoughts are constantly with relatives and friends abroad.

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Source: Own elaboration.

'too expensive', but this is not so much an objective 'fact' (after all, Poles do migrate successfully internally) because they compare them with places they know to be relatively cheap abroad.

Migration is a 'leveller' in the sense that migration supplies some Poles with opportunities that other Poles would derive from other sources. These include, for example, pensioners who otherwise could not afford to travel abroad, or small-town residents with few labour market opportunities locally. However, some people also suffer disproportionately from migration effects (e.g. from the discourse of hostility about Polish migrants that corrodes trust in high-migration locations). Opportunity structures for changing lifestyles vary considerably depending on income and location: Indian takeaways do not open in villages, although Italian pizza restaurants do open in smallish towns. Overall, one is drawn to the not unexpected conclusion that migration makes most difference to the lives of people with relatively few resources, but that people with more money and cultural capital living in already-changing cities are better placed to consolidate and diffuse beliefs and practices acquired abroad. However, this remains a deeply individual matter, depending on the exact nature of their transnational fields, and in some cases on opportunities for reciprocity and the circulation of influences between Poland and foreign countries. This becomes even more evident in the sensitive area of cultural and identity change, discussed in [chapter 8](#).

## Notes

- 1 Respondents are asked whether they agree (on a four-point scale) that 'I see myself as an autonomous individual'. See <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>. 77.1 per cent/79.6 per cent agreed in 2005/2012, and 15.4 per cent/15 per cent disagreed.
- 2 The percentage of Poles believing that corruption was a big problem in Poland fell from 95 per cent in 2004 to 76 per cent in 2017, although this is still a high figure (Boguszewski 2017c, 1). 10 per cent in 2017 claimed to know someone who took bribes, compared with 23 per cent in 2004 and 29 per cent in 2000 (Boguszewski 2017b, 2).
- 3 Galent, Goddeeris and Niedźwiedzki (2009, 60) tell the story of a migrant from Leuven who, when he went back to Poland, was laughed at for observing all the rules of the road and stopping to let pedestrians cross the road even from a distance. They note that Poles often remarked on the safe driving of Leuven drivers. This was 10 years ago.
- 4 EVS data on trust for 2012 suggest the implied distinction between Warsaw and Lublin might have some basis in fact, but the sample size is small.
- 5 Meanwhile the Irish figure had dropped by 10 points to 44 per cent, no doubt reflecting the impact of the economic crisis. Figures for Germany were 23 per cent (2004) and 29 per cent (2014); from the United Kingdom, 38 per cent (2004) and 39 per cent (2012).

- 6 See, e.g. Czapiński and Panek (2015); Omyła-Rudzka (2016b). For detailed discussion in English, see Gołębiowska (2014).
- 7 See Karpiński (2016) for discussion of how question framing influences results for surveys on trust.
- 8 The exception is that residents of towns of under 20,000 are more trusting than those of towns of 20,000–100,000 – but less trusting than residents of cities over 100,000.
- 9 This assertion is based on my experience of teaching Polish students in London. Mroczek's Internet survey of 74 Poles aged under 40 living in the United Kingdom found that 77 per cent 'were positively disposed towards their fellow nationals' (Mroczek 2010, 142). However, the question is rather vague, and the methodology is not clearly explained, so this is not strong evidence of positivity.
- 10 Another version of the saying is that a Pole would drown someone for 1 euro.
- 11 In surveys where respondents were asked to choose the two most important influences on professional success, 28 per cent named contacts and patronage in 2013, compared with 18 per cent in 2017 (Głowacki 2017a).
- 12 Official documentation on the labour market, produced by the job centres (PUP) rarely even hint at this reality of local life.
- 13 Cities that acquired net internal migration between 2007 and 2016 were Gdańsk, Gdynia, Koszalin, Opole, Rzeszów and Szczecin. Cities that increased their net internal migration in the same years were Chorzów, Kraków, Olsztyn, Warsaw, Wrocław and Zielona Góra (GUS 2016).
- 14 See <http://biqdata.wyborcza.pl/polish-ways-where-the-residents-of-large-cities-come-from> for interactive maps showing the birthplaces of residents in 16 Polish cities (published 2 June 2017). Last accessed 10 December 2017.
- 15 41 per cent thought Poland was united and divided in equal measure, and 40 per cent that it was more divided than united. The most frequently mentioned uniting factor was 'disasters and defeats'.

## Culture and identity

ANNE WHITE

### 1. Introduction

This chapter explores ways in which ideas about culture and identity may be changing in Poland. In particular, I discuss how cultural diversity is becoming more accepted. As already mentioned, each migrant who returns adds a piece to the mosaic of Polish society, changing its composition. They can therefore add to or subtract from the number of people open to difference. Social change also occurs when migrants directly transmit ideas, practices, beliefs, norms and even values to stayers. Though scholars often see values as deep-rooted and hard to change, Goodwin and fellow cross-cultural psychologists argue that Polish migrants can acquire more ‘open to difference’ values. Their findings support the common-sense expectation that ‘migration is likely to challenge existing world views of the person, including values and beliefs’ (Goodwin, Polek and Bardi 2012, 362). As mentioned in [chapter 2](#), Portes, too, asserts that migration effects may ‘go deep into the culture, transforming the value system’ (2010, 1544).

Trends in Poland, insofar as survey evidence can be taken at face value, are towards more openness. However, there are also counter-trends. Family socialisation, formal education, the media, Internet, politicians, and so forth all influence stayers and help make some Poles increasingly open, or the reverse. The impact of exposure to foreigners in Poland is discussed in [chapter 10](#). Migration and visits abroad, as discussed in this chapter, are significant additional influences. Although people of all classes and ages can become more open and tolerant as a result of migration, the ‘value added’ may be highest for the least educated. For them, migration can be a truly eye-opening experience.

Gołębiowska (2014) writes about the 'many faces of tolerance'. People are often more tolerant in one dimension than in others. Typically, Poles are more accepting of foreign nationals than of LGBT people, and more accepting of some nationalities than others. Furthermore, there are shallower or deeper forms of 'cosmopolitanism'. Exponents of the first acknowledge the right to exist of different cultures, and are even curious. However, they rarely notice interconnections or shared identities between themselves and others, which would characterise deeper cosmopolitanism. Blindness to interconnections may coexist with a feeling that one's own identity is best and/or a tendency to perform cosmopolitanism because it is felt to be expected, or just part of everyday life as practised abroad, without really being very convinced of the value of diversity.

Cultural fear, the most important cause of xeno- and homophobia, can be overcome by contact between people that promotes positive views of one another. Opportunities for contact and especially conviviality (enjoyable socialising) allow both migrants and stayers to acquire and diffuse ideas about tolerance. To acquire such social remittances, language competence is particularly important, and the chapter includes a section on language knowledge among Poles. As argued earlier in this book, remitting at all stages is most likely to be successful where there is an equal relationship between transmitter and recipient, and particularly when both parties are able to exchange these roles. (Return) migrants should also have good networks in both the receiving and the sending societies in order to acquire and diffuse social remittances.

Of course, the national context is also important, particularly the role of right-wing media and political parties. In Poland these warn against contact with Western receiving societies, which can supposedly corrode national culture and values, particularly 'family values' and religiosity (Leszczyńska 2017; Smolenski 2016). In fact, according to CBOS surveys, Poles seem decreasingly to feel that being Catholic is a particularly important attribute of Polish identity. Asked in 2015 to name the two most important of seven possible attributes, most respondents chose 'feeling Polish' and 'being a Polish citizen'; 7 per cent chose 'being a Catholic' (compared with 14 per cent in 2005) (Omyła-Rudzka 2015, 6). However, surveys about religiosity show continuing high levels of belief in God. The most significant change seems to be that religion is increasingly considered a personal affair, with some drop in regular church attendance, and this individualisation or 'privatisation' of religion in Poland must to some

extent be reinforced by the same, but stronger trend among Poles abroad, as discussed in [chapter 9](#).

Since culture and identity are complex and largely subjective phenomena, the topic of this chapter poses particular methodological challenges. Trends are hard to chart with survey evidence, which by its nature is superficial and ambiguous. Qualitative data is useful for putting agents of social change under the microscope and for understanding how and why individual people modify their views, but of course not for establishing ‘facts’ about trends; indeed, interviewees’ assertions about what is changing around them can betray wishful thinking rather than hard evidence. Binnie and Klesse (2013, 1119) criticise the optimism of a Polish LGBT activist, Łukasz Palucki, who asserted that ‘Polish mentality is changing because of them, because of [Polish] immigrants who are going back [to small-town and rural Poland], like a bomb, like a bomb in the gasoline station.’ However, though no bomb has exploded yet, Palucki’s faith that heterosexual return migrants are revolutionising Polish attitudes towards homosexuality is important as a motivating factor. Activists in social movements need to be optimistic that social change will occur – if not a bomb, at least some seedlings of change.

Positionality can be a problem in this area. Binnie and Klesse (2013, 1119–20) distance themselves from Palucki’s assertion partly because they are wary of being assumed to condone orientalism, the supposition that West is best. However, one should also avoid falling into the opposite trap (adopted by liberal pessimists) of refusing to believe evidence of change towards greater openness in Poland.

I argue that analysis of survey data and individual migrants’ thought processes through in-depth interviews suggests that change is indeed occurring, and that migration is an ‘eye-opener’ and ‘leveller’ that helps change happen, among people from all social backgrounds. Between this introductory section and the concluding section, this chapter is structured in four sections. After considering survey evidence of trends towards acceptance of diversity in Section 2, I discuss in Section 3 why migration may help this happen. Since Catholicism has historically been central to Polish Gentile identity, and because it is still so important in Polish society, Section 4 surveys (more briefly) evidence about religiosity; in Section 5, I consider how this may be affected by migration. This section particularly emphasises the geographical diversity of Poland.

## 2. Polish trends regarding attitudes towards foreigners and national, ethnic and sexual minorities

Survey evidence, at least up to 2015, suggests that Poland is becoming more open in many respects. Of course, to some extent people answer surveys based on what they think are socially acceptable answers, taking their cues from public discourse. Gołębiowska (2014, 20) suggested that openly displaying prejudice against some outgroups circa 2013 was more acceptable than others. Anti-Semitism and xenophobia were the most proscribed, misogyny more acceptable, and homophobia most acceptable. Before the refugee crisis and accompanying rise in xenophobic political rhetoric, a CBOS survey conducted 25 years after the collapse of the communist regime indicated that 47 per cent of Poles believed tolerance of alternative viewpoints had increased since then, while 20 per cent believed the opposite (Boguszewski 2014a, 93). More specifically, for example, the proportion of Poles saying they believed that homosexuality ‘should not be tolerated’ fell from 41 per cent in 2001 to 26 per cent in 2013 (Feliksiak 2013, 62).

Acceptance of ethnic diversity also seems to have grown. Poland’s population was 96 per cent ethnically Polish, according to the 2011 census (GUS 2012, 105), so ethnic uniformity is the normal state of affairs for most Poles. When asked in 2015 whether ‘it’s good if a country is ethnically uniform’, 42 per cent of CBOS respondents disagreed<sup>1</sup> and 52 per cent agreed. In 2005 only 36 per cent thought ethnic uniformity was bad, compared with 56 per cent who considered it good (Omyła-Rudzka 2015, 10–11). In the same 2015 study, 74 per cent of interviewees believed that it was possible to have two home countries (*ojczyzny*), a three percentage point increase since 2005 (Omyła-Rudzka 2015, 7). Acceptance of immigrant workers is also growing. The percentage of Poles who believe that foreigners should be allowed to ‘undertake any work’ in Poland has risen from 9 per cent in 1992 to 56 per cent in 2016 (Feliksiak 2016, 8).

Polls also show a drop in hostility towards other national groups, including neighbours in CEE; nationals of Western countries to which Poles migrate; nationalities commonly found as immigrants in Poland; and the most stigmatised groups, Roma and Jews. See [table 8.1](#) for attitudes towards a selection of nationalities from a wider CBOS survey. This survey evidence of declining xenophobia among the population at large puts into perspective the recent rise in hate crimes (Klaver et al. 2016, 32–3) perpetrated by nationalist extremists, who do not represent ordinary Poles, as well as the sharp decrease in preparedness to welcome



**Table 8.1** Percentage of Poles claiming to feel dislike (*niechęć*) of selected nationalities

	2004	2017
'Arabs'	59	59
Roma	56	50
Russians	53	38
Jews	45	26
Vietnamese	38	23
Chinese people	37	21
Germans	34	22
British (literally 'English')	17	16
Czechs	14	10
Italians	11	10

Sources: Strzeszewski 2005, 2; Omyła-Rudzka 2017, 3.

refugees, from 72 per cent of CBOS respondents in May 2015 to 44 per cent in December 2016 (Głowacki 2017c, 2).<sup>2</sup> The alarmist and Islamophobic presentation of the European refugee crisis by politicians and the media, including social media, has influenced answers to survey questions specifically about refugees. Considering the results shown in table 8.1, it seems that fears about refugees should not be equated with blanket dislike of all foreigners. On the other hand, backing up the impression of a hardening of attitudes towards outgroups, fewer respondents in June 2015 than in 2005 said it was 'good to have neighbours whose culture and traditions differ from the Polish ones' (a drop from 53 per cent to 50 per cent) (Omyła-Rudzka 2015, 12).

The surveys mentioned above predictably tend to find that people who know members of a minority group or another nationality are more favourably disposed towards them (e.g. Feliksiak 2013, 62; Feliksiak 2016, 11). The surveys do not reveal how these Poles know openly gay people, and so on, but it would be reasonable to assume that in many cases they have met them abroad. For example, Feliksiak (2013, 61), pointing out that the number of Poles who know LGBT people rose between 2005 and 2013 from 16 per cent to 25 per cent, writes that 'among those more likely to know a gay or lesbian were young respondents and . . . inhabitants of small towns', both of which represent categories particularly likely to have lived abroad. Up to 20 per cent of Poles know Muslims personally, but since only about 0.1 per cent of the Polish population is Muslim (Pędziwiatr 2015), it must be the case that many met Muslims abroad.

### 3. Migration vis-à-vis other factors promoting cosmopolitan attitudes

‘Cosmopolitanism’ has acquired many meanings since Kant. More complex definitions, taking into account specific attitudes towards politics and the economy, and/or morality, or particular cosmopolitan practices, are needed for quantitative studies, where different variables require measurement. In this chapter, cosmopolitanism is understood in a more inclusive way, as ‘openness to cultural difference’. I also take into account Delanty’s suggestion (2012, 340) that a cosmopolitan disposition is ‘an orientation towards tolerance of diversity, recognition of interconnectedness and a general disposition of openness to others’. However, I argue that ‘recognition of interconnectedness’ cannot be assumed to go naturally with ‘tolerance of diversity’; rather, it is a deeper cosmopolitanism.

As Skey (2013, 236) observes, ‘people shift between subject positions as they encounter different forms of “otherness” in their everyday lives’. For example, migrants can have different attitudes towards majority and minority populations. Wiesław, a returnee to Wrocław, stated, ‘I liked everything in the UK . . . people [*sic*] were very friendly . . . which you can’t say for example of all those newcomers, I don’t know, from India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka’. As Fox, Morosany and Szilassy (2012; 2015) illustrate with reference to Hungarians and Romanians in the United Kingdom, and Garapich (2016c, 251–67) and Nowicka (2018, 830) to Poles, this can accord with a perceived racial hierarchy, where white EU migrants position themselves alongside white majority populations in western European countries but ‘above’ black people.

The term ‘cosmopolitan’ is normally used with reference to receiving societies, reflecting the receiving country bias and the dominance of Western scholarship. Cosmopolitanism tends to be associated with globalisation and, as such, its spread can be seen as part of a process accompanying increased mobility since the 1990s, although an interest in how people become more open to cultural difference as a result of migration predates the 1990s popularity of the term.

Keating (2016, 340) suggests that ‘one of the key questions that the latest empirical research has sought to address is which individuals or groups are more likely to exhibit these dispositions and why’. Helbling and Teney, in their review of the literature, suggest (2015, 447) two types of explanation. Different scholars have been interested in how cosmopolitanism relates to (1) socio-demographic factors and (2) what they label ‘transnational’ activities, including simple travelling.<sup>3</sup> The next section

looks at both in turn, considering in particular how they intertwine, as well as at foreign language learning as a cause and consequence of migration.

With regard to socio-demographic characteristics, Gołębiowska, who defines tolerance as ‘acceptance and equal treatment of an outgroup or members of an outgroup’ (2014, 169), argues that ‘religiosity, education, and age, in that order, emerge as the consistently most important influences on Polish tolerance’ (172). Recent CBOS surveys regularly point to education, income and residence in one of Poland’s five large cities<sup>4</sup> as being associated with more liberal views.<sup>5</sup> With reference to attitudes towards LGBT people, Feliksiak (2013) and Gołębiowska (2014) find that younger, less religious, more left-wing, more politically interested and more Europhile respondents are more likely to demonstrate tolerance.

The CBOS survey *Młodzież 2016* (Youth 2016)<sup>6</sup> suggests that younger people, whose views are obviously particularly important in pointing towards future trends, are polarised, increasingly tolerant, and not much different in outlook from older adults (Głowacki 2017b). 39 per cent agreed and 51 per cent disagreed in 2016 that ‘homosexuality was not a normal thing and must not be tolerated’, compared with 46 per cent and 45 per cent respectively three years earlier. Women everywhere tend to be more accepting of homosexuality than men, and young Polish women and men hold opposite views. Only 22 per cent of women agreed that homosexuality was abnormal, compared with 53 per cent of men (66 per cent in 2013). By contrast, young people showed declining acceptance of immigration. Most disagreed with the statement that ‘foreigners should not be allowed to settle permanently in Poland’, but this dropped from 65 per cent in 2013 to 51 per cent in 2016. 37 per cent agreed, compared to 26 per cent three years before (Głowacki 2017b, 135–7; Badora 2014, 79–83).

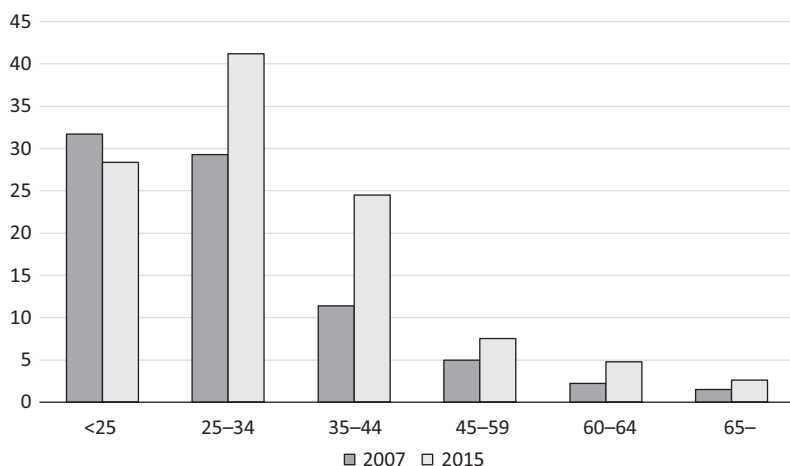
There is a common view that ‘cosmopolitanism’ is confined to an educated elite, reflecting empirical evidence of correlation between educational level and tolerance in various countries, including Poland.<sup>7</sup> To some extent this is connected to the content of education received, as opposed to other attributes of educated people, such as enhanced reasoning skills (Gołębiowska 2014, 18). Kennedy (2009, 22), writing about middle-class Polish and other EU migrants in Manchester, suggests that their class background ‘endows them not just with educational credentials but also social confidence and an individual rather than a collective frame of reference’.

However, capacity for reflexivity and empathy is not necessarily linked to education. It could, for example, result from parental socialisa-

tion; some parents, irrespective of social class background, bring up their children to be respectful towards members of outgroups whom they encounter, for instance disabled people or Roma, even if they have never met a black or gay person. In this chapter I give examples of reflexivity among people of all educational and class backgrounds. For example, social workers in Lublin Region – well placed to observe the households of poorer local residents – opined that ‘not only do they become more open to foreign cultures (especially food and customs) but also after they return both they and people around them become more tolerant towards difference’ (Kawczyńska-Butrym, Ogryzko-Wiewiórowska and Butrym 2012, 61).

Since ability to communicate with people unlike oneself is a key to acquiring empathy and tolerance, it is unsurprising to find foreign language knowledge as an indicator of tolerance among Polish migrants (Garapich 2016c, 255; Nowicka and Krzyżowski 2017, 9). The growth in English-language competence is in itself an important trend in Poland,<sup>8</sup> facilitating migration and mixing with other nationalities abroad. One of my interviewees, Dorota, a 34-year-old teacher from Lublin, observed that ‘the academic year when English became compulsory at school was a watershed . . . All my generation learned English to some extent. That really opens doors.’ For many return migrants and stayers who visit migrants, competence has been enhanced by language use abroad, so improvements in Polish trends must also be partly thanks to migration. Rosalia, a 24-year-old student from Wrocław, suggested the existence of a virtuous circle: ‘There’s that exchange the whole time, either tourists are here or Poles go abroad, and it means we become more open to foreign languages and understand more how necessary they are.’

In 1996, only 14 per cent of Polish young people declared they could make themselves understood in English (Boguszewski et al. 2014, 133, 135). By 2005, 73 per cent of under 25s claimed some knowledge of English (Panek, Czapiński and Kotowska 2005, 41). This helps explain why this generation so readily migrated to Ireland and the United Kingdom. The Youth 2008 survey also found that young people whose parents had worked abroad were particularly likely to claim foreign language knowledge (CBOS 2009, 126). By contrast, in 2005 only 43 per cent of Poles in the next age group, aged 25–34, knew any English at all (Panek, Czapiński and Kotowska 2005, 41).<sup>9</sup> From 2009 onwards, however – when figures are only available for ‘active’ language knowledge – it was this 25–34-year-old group which knew English better than any other age group, even students, whom one might expect to be the most confident, since they were currently studying languages (see figure 8.1). This suggests that the



**Fig. 8.1** Share of Poles in different age groups possessing a self-declared ‘active’ knowledge of English, 2007–15. Source: Based on data from Panek et al. (2009, 39; 2015, 34).

25–34-year-olds used it at work in Poland and/or abroad. In another survey, 84 per cent of return labour migrants to Małopolska declared a more than basic knowledge of foreign languages, and more than half said they were fluent or advanced. In general, returnees in this survey emphasised how much more they learned by using their languages abroad than they did in formal education in Poland (CDS 2010a, 151–2). In parallel surveys in Lower Silesia and Silesia, 87 per cent and 90 per cent of returnees respectively said they had learned or improved their language abroad (CDS 2010b; CDS 2011).

The remainder of this section considers the effect of migration and of living within transnational fields on promoting cosmopolitan attitudes, including their differentiated effect on different social groups. A survey by Mole et al. (2017, 13) found that among heterosexual respondents from 10 new EU member-states, those who had lived longer in London were also more accepting of homosexuality. Fitzgerald, Winstone and Pre-stage (2014) arrived at the same conclusion, using European Social Survey data (n = 1291) for CEE migrants in western Europe. Ahmadov and Sasse, discussing 22 in-depth interviews in Oxfordshire (2016, 17) comment that ‘the perception of a norm of tolerance in the UK and comparisons with a less open and still less diverse society in Poland is mentioned in almost every interview, leading the interviewees to conclude that the

experience of migration has made them more “open”, “tolerant”, and “less critical of others”.

With regard to return migrants living in Poland, a 2012 survey of returnees to Podlasie found that 86 per cent agreed they had become ‘more open and tolerant’ as a result of migration. This was one of the potential benefits of migration on which there was greatest agreement (Dziekońska 2012, 137). Lucyna, a 36-year-old nursery schoolteacher and student, pointed to the migrant’s reflexivity rather than to norms of tolerance in the receiving society as the main reason promoting openness.

I think lots of people have come back from migration. They have some influence too. Because they somehow look at foreigners differently, and somehow their environment in fact and I think in Wrocław and Poland generally every family has someone who migrated and thanks to that they have a different viewpoint and somehow accept those people more. Because they know that when they are abroad they want to be treated well, too.

Obviously, not everyone who migrates becomes open minded. Nowicka and Rovisco (2012, 9) suggest that ‘cosmopolitanism is better seen as a form of imagination – that one can . . . develop in certain transnational contexts – rather than an essential quality of mobile people’. Nowicka and Krzyżowski (2017, 15) suggest that rather than truly becoming more tolerant, Polish migrants often shift towards ‘aversive racism or homophobia’, learning to avoid openly manifesting intolerance because they realise this is considered socially unacceptable abroad. Similarly, Mole et al. (2017, 217) point out that CEE migrants may simply ‘learn to *perform tolerance* in the United Kingdom rather than *become tolerant*, a trend that has also been identified among indigenous British people in contexts of cultural diversity’. Galent, Goddeeris and Niedźwiedzki (2009, 72), after telling the story of a middle-aged woman from Podlasie who claimed to have shed her intolerant views after working as a cleaner for an older gay couple in Leuven, suggest that Poles working in Belgian households accept their hosts’ points of view out of politeness, but only temporarily.

It is also possible to become more racist and homophobic as the result of migration, as Nowicka and Krzyżowski (2017, 15) found in their study of Poles working in British and German cities, especially Birmingham, the least tolerant city studied. There is often a circulation of attitudes between Poland and western Europe. Gawlewicz (2015a; 2015b) illustrates how some migrants become more racist and transmit racist

attitudes to their relatives based in Poland. Nowicka (2018, 825) argues that 'Polish immigrants in England incorporate, reproduce, and transform aspects of racial discourses present in the British public space into their cultural repertoire (habitus) that was shaped by education and exposure to other [racist] discourses in Poland'.

Garapich (2016c, 261) connects racism with snobbery, arguing that racism among aspiring middle-class London Poles may be a distancing device, picked up from local white people, to assert their middle-class status. Workplaces can be sites for imbibing racist attitudes, for example because of 'ethnic competition' (Nowicka and Krzyżowski 2017, 8). My interviewee Wiesław, quoted above, had a long-running conflict with Sri Lankan fellow shop assistants, a conflict that seems to have hardened his attitudes towards them.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, cosmopolitan attitudes are often positively associated with higher levels of education and hence with social class. However, qualitative data shows plenty of examples even of well-educated migrants who do not become open as a result of being abroad, although they may be careful to apologise for expressing racist sentiments. This is illustrated in the following quotations.

I feel better in white Europe, to say something controversial. I felt the same in Belgium, in Antwerp I didn't see a single Belgian. Only black people. I don't have anything against them but, having gone to Belgium, I would have liked to meet a typical Frenchman, like in books or films. (Grzegorz, aged 21, student in Warsaw, visits relatives in London, 2016)

They [asylum seekers] were often from African countries, that language barrier, mentality, work-shy . . . and huge help from the [Dutch] state . . . It was a huge shock for me, over the top. A Pole, for instance, who speaks Dutch, a graduate, knowledgeable, eager to work, and how's he treated? (Robert, aged 34, return migrant and civil servant, Lublin)

Given that in countries such as Poland, people of all social backgrounds migrate, it seems important, when considering what types of attitude may be remitted to stayers, to be on the lookout for examples of cosmopolitanism even among less educated migrants. As indicated above, for example, almost all Polish labour migrants, whatever their previous education, feel they improve their foreign languages while abroad. Many scholars no longer associate cosmopolitanism exclusively with hyper-

mobile elites (see, e.g. discussion in [Datta 2009](#), 353; [Moroşanu 2013](#), 2163). Indeed, the latter may lead rather socially circumscribed lives ([Helbling and Teney 2015](#)), whereas ordinary workers can have more contact with a range of people in the destination country. Werbner (1999, 18) argues that ‘even working class labour migrants may become cosmopolitans, willing to “engage with the Other”’. Datta (2009, 357) also argues that working-class migrants can also ‘perform varieties of cosmopolitan behaviours’, as she illustrates with examples of East European, mostly Polish, construction workers in London. Some other studies of Poles abroad also suggest that increasingly tolerant attitudes are not just to be found among the most educated migrants. Mole et al. (2017), for example, found that gender, not education, was the most significant variable determining the acquisition of more accepting attitudes towards homosexuality in London and Berlin.

People whose exposure to difference is mostly from migration rather than from other channels (especially people without higher education, if their school education did not particularly teach respect for diversity)<sup>10</sup> are therefore more likely to acquire their cosmopolitan attitudes from migration. Kuhn, writing about acquisition of European identities, argues that the ‘impact of transnational practices on European identity is stronger among the low educated than among the highly educated’ (2012, 995).

For the low-educated people, interacting across borders can be the decisive moment that leads them to adopt a European identity. To a certain extent, the exposure to a different culture might have the same formative effects as brought forward by education. Moreover, while low-skilled Europeans might be the “losers” of integration at the outset, their cross-border mobility and interactions might be a way to circumvent their marginalized position. ([Kuhn 2012](#), 999)

If true, this supports my argument (advanced in [chapter 7](#)) that migration is a leveller. In other words, it is not only important not to overlook how cosmopolitanism evolves among some working-class migrants, but *particularly* important to search out examples of such change, because they are the people for whom migration is most likely to change their opinions. For example, Jolanta, interviewed in 2016, was a 53-year-old cleaner from a Warsaw satellite town working in Warsaw. She visits her adult son in Copenhagen; her second son was living near Berlin.

They have a different level of tolerance there and it’s totally obvious in public, with [two] men or [two] girls holding hands or



embracing, no one is shy about doing this and no one will attack them for it . . . I changed, and my children changed me [laughs]. As I mentioned earlier, I grew up in communist times, when the propaganda was that Poland was good and the West was bad, but thanks to the fact that first one and now my second child has gone abroad my opinion on tolerance and even that I am more open to everything . . . Now I'm quite different. I look at life differently.

Eliza, aged 26, a cleaner and carer without a complete secondary education, had spent seven years in Madrid, where she had often socialised with fellow Poles, her ex-neighbours from the same poor housing estate in Grajewo. Despite her 'unfavourable' socio-demographic features, when interviewed in 2012 she displayed a similarly open disposition as Jolanta, making no disparaging comments about other nationalities. Her mother, who – as mentioned in [chapter 7](#) – had slimmed successfully in Spain, had also caught Eliza's enthusiasm:

I really enjoy speaking Spanish. I've got lots of friends who phone me on Skype, we speak Spanish. My mother really likes it when I chat in Spanish. She says, 'Translate it for me, translate it!' [laughs] She watches those Mexican-Spanish soaps and says, 'Translate what they are saying!' . . . You can make friends with great people, Chinese, other people, various. I had lots of friends. And there are lots of Poles, including from Grajewo, an awful lot. Even from our estate. Almost half our estate is in one city. When we met one another in a bar it was like we were in Grajewo . . . I met lots of Spaniards, really nice people, and even made friends with a very nice, what's the word, Brazilian girl, from Brazil, she worked in a bar . . . And there were lots of Ukrainians, including some who became very good friends.

As a migrant cleaner, Eliza constantly encountered non-Spaniards in Madrid. Wessendorf (2015), in an article titled 'All the People Speak Bad English', refers to 'cornershop cosmopolitanism' – sometimes known as 'everyday multiculturalism' – to describe the taken-for-granted and pragmatic approach to super-diversity common in parts of London. There is no majority population, and everyone is a member of a minority. It is this lived quality of cosmopolitanism, and the experiences of sociability between different groups, that is the most efficient at entrenching it in some people's mindsets – cosmopolitanism through practice. Rzepnikowska (2016) also illustrates this for Manchester and Barce-

lona, through simple examples such as Polish manual workers exchanging plants with non-Polish neighbours, or going out for meals with their work team.

Leszek, a Wrocław builder with vocational secondary education, illustrated his point that English people were friendlier than Poles abroad by describing favourite clients from when he worked as a plumber in London:

An English man, well, he was of Jamaican origin but born in England, and his wife was black too, but she was German. We worked for him, and they were really great people. Every day we'd go to their house at eight but before starting work we'd drink coffee, have a chat, tell them about ourselves, they were really nice, they smiled a lot, and always pleased with our work.

In less cosmopolitan settings abroad, interethnic tensions are often greater. However, my interviews suggested that the poorest Polish migrants, reflecting upon the injustice of racism they encountered in such places, could arrive at the conclusion, not that Poles should be particularly privileged for being white (see above), but that people of all nations should be treated equally. One such case was Iwona, aged 39, who had lived for 14 years in ethnically diverse but – unlike Madrid or London – not super-diverse southern Italy. Like Eliza, she had left Grajewo immediately after school, without taking her secondary school leaving exam.

If you live in the south of Italy, there's racism. There is racism. Even though it's supposed to be such a civilised country, the West, but it's not true. They don't like us, or Arabs, or Turks, Albanians, Ukrainians, no one! Only themselves! . . . I had different friends, Italian, Albanian, Ukrainian – that was the only way. I lived there a long time so knew everyone local . . . That racism was the worst thing, in offices, if a Polish woman showed up they treated her differently, could you wait because this man has come in – but I came first! . . . Why did they treat me like that? How am I worse? A person doesn't feel that they are worse! Just because they don't know the language. If you came here, I wouldn't treat you like that. It should depend on character, what a person is like.

This passage shows Iwona's capacity for reflexivity, but the interview, which took place in the presence of her relative, also a former migrant, turned into a conversation between the two of them which indicated

how, in families with multiple migration experiences (and in high-migration locations like Grajewo) returnees compare notes about life abroad, which can also develop ideas about equality.

TOMASZ: I worked for good farmers, they understood me, there wasn't any of that racism. There was a young farmer, he was 32 I think, and his 60-year-old father . . . . He didn't drive us on, like some Germans, *schneller, schneller!* Everything was relaxed, we'd chat over meals . . . . He did know Polish swear words. He knew some common words like 'ladder', and 'come on', which I'd say to my friend, he knew those basic things . . . . Usually in Germany the Germans eat separately from the Poles or other foreigners. In our case, no: they'd wait to have dinner until we came and then we'd all eat together.

IWONA: In our case we did sit separately.

The above examples are of working-class migrants who were well embedded in the destination society and in some cases had gone abroad when they were still young. Being abroad temporarily – for example, as a construction worker moving from site to site in different countries – unsurprisingly leads to more superficial contacts and impressions, no doubt often reinforced by a sense of loneliness. Superficial contacts can entrench the idea that Poland is best and that foreigners are cold and unfriendly. For example, in Limanowa in 2013, Jerzy, an unemployed builder with a university degree, commented, 'People live differently abroad. No one cares about anyone else or talks to them. But in Poland family ties are strong'. Andrzej, another unemployed builder (without higher education) interviewed in Limanowa, remarked, 'More people would stay in Norway but they're all afraid about their children, however. Children are the most important thing, at least, definitely for Poles'.

Superficial impressions of family and religious celebrations abroad can reinforce feelings that Polish is best. For example, Grażyna, a retired civil servant and stayer who lived in Wrocław but whose daughter lived in Germany, reminisced, 'Twenty years ago, I was in Germany for Christmas. Oh dear. They had no traditions! We were invited to a German family [for Christmas dinner] but it was such a modest snack, as if in Poland a friend had phoned and said she'd drop by for coffee.'

This perception of western Europe is already being conveyed to Poles in Poland by some priests and politicians and, though it would not make sense to argue on economic grounds against migration to the West in a place like Limanowa, assertions about a cold and alien Western culture

sometimes do not fall on deaf ears. Andrzej's comments about children quoted in the previous paragraph relate to the fact that such fears are intensified by stories circulating about Polish children being taken into care by supposedly overzealous Norwegian authorities (Erdal 2015) – an example of a social remittance emanating from a migrant milieu that stokes xenophobia in Poland.

However, people who do not have much exposure to natives in the destination country can also pick up 'cosmopolitan' attitudes, as was the case of Lech, a Grajewo builder with a basic vocational education, in his fifties. Forced by poverty to migrate repeatedly to support his large family, Lech had worked in several countries abroad, loved to travel, could make himself understood by sign language and asserted that people everywhere were different. He pointed out that he had worked for 10 different German employers and 3 Polish ones, and they had all behaved differently to each another. On the other hand, stressing the connections between them, Lech pointed out that building work was basically the same in every country: 'You put one brick on top of another.' Similarly, Joanna, a 55-year-old unemployed manual worker in Limanowa, who occasionally worked in a garden centre in Manchester and who had good relations with her English workmates (one of whom she mentioned to be learning Polish), asserted that work was work: which country it took place in was 'irrelevant' to her.

Kuhn (2012, 1005) cites Pichler (2009) to the effect that, in Kuhn's paraphrase, 'while highly educated people generally hold highly cosmopolitan attitudes, there is a much greater variance in attitudes among low-educated people. They seem to be more influenced by personal experiences.' The important point here is that the outcome hangs on migration as a *personal experience* (i.e. on the particularities of each person's personality traits, migration circumstances and transnational social field).

As already discussed in chapters 3 and 7, the principle of exchange and equality is important in facilitating successful social remitting. In particular, migrants and their stayer associates are more likely to welcome contact with foreigners if they do not feel that they are always in someone else's home, and can invite foreigners back to Poland and welcome them with hospitality. Galent, Goddeeris and Niedźwiedzki (2009, 130), for example, writing about live-in domestics in Leuven, describe how they became family friends of their employers and invited them to Poland, leading those employers to see Poland as 'green instead of grey'. Ahmadov and Sasse (2016, 17), in their interviews with 22 Poles in the United Kingdom and 12 of their close contacts in Poland, found that:

for most of the interviewees with international (including partly British) networks this wish to inform includes taking their friends to Poland. The resulting increase in awareness about Poland among non-Poles from the host society represents an indirect and as yet underappreciated form of social remittances. It is mirrored by the knowledge about life in the UK exhibited by many of the interviewed family members and friends in Poland.

Among my sample, Tomasz from Grajewo, for example, recounted how his two employers had separately visited him in Poland, describing how rural north-east Poland looked through their German eyes.

I was driving the car, and we saw a horse and cart. It was a few years back, when that was a normal sight in Grajewo, but in Germany horses are just for leisure. And he said 'Wait, wait!' and quickly got out his camera and took a picture . . . He was amazed. In the West agriculture is different, here in the Mazury Region it was like in the nineteenth century; the German had only heard about such things from his grandparents.

Lucyna, who had returned from Dublin two years previously, explained how her family was still in touch with many Irish friends and had recently invited one family with six children to stay with them in Wrocław. Thanks to their belief in 'Polish hospitality' they would not let their friends stay in a hotel. Wanda, a 63-year-old Wrocław retired social worker whose daughter had married a British man, similarly described how even when her son-in-law's parents had insisted on staying in a hotel in Wrocław, she had made sure to extend constant 'Polish' hospitality: they ate all their meals at her house. Wanda also described how she and her daughter swapped packets of flower seeds, a botanical exchange that to Wanda symbolised the intertwining of Polish and English culture. Similarly, in August 2016, Iwona, a 34-year-old psychologist and Italophile, described how her Italian relatives were currently holidaying and enjoying hospitality in Lublin.

They were in Kraków two years ago. They saw Krakow. Paulo's mother wanted to see Auschwitz, so they visited that part of Poland, and Paulo was at a Polish wedding, a friend's wedding, so they saw all of that. Last year they spent two weeks at the seaside, here in Poland, so they saw the seaside, with the children. They visit my parents, and see Lublin. On Sunday they are coming to our house for

dinner because on 1 September they're flying home . . . They went to a country fair . . . They do sightseeing when they're here.

In other cases, Polish students living abroad invite their friends and classmates of various nationalities to stop over with their parents based in Polish tourist destinations. For example, Maria and Sławomir listed a string of friends of their daughter's from her student days abroad who had stayed in their flat or (when this overflowed) their allotment shed in Warsaw. They recalled all their nationalities and concluded 'those were splendid times'. When Beata attended her son's wedding in Spain, she found that she already knew many of the guests because she had hosted them in Wrocław. Rosalia, a former Erasmus student, framed her activity in the Erasmus Student Network in Wrocław in terms of exchange:

Usually if someone comes back from abroad, if we're talking about Erasmus, because that's what I have had more dealings with, as soon as they come back they want to meet foreigners [here] . . . When I came back [from Lithuania to Poland] and began working with Erasmus students all the events I organised were to promote Poland.

Similarly, grandparents on visits abroad to look after grandchildren take the opportunity to publicise Poland. Ewa, mentioned in [chapter 7](#) for her visits to the United States, recounted a story of chatting to a hospital nurse, her daughter's colleague, about Wrocław, and subsequently, as an encouragement to visit, sending the nurse a postcard and a Polish flag. Both made their way, apparently permanently, onto the hospital notice-board. School visits abroad, even from small towns, are also opportunities for gestures of Polish hospitality. For example, Halina, aged 57, unemployed and married to a factory worker in Limanowa, from a family where no one had migrated, mentioned approvingly that her daughter had stayed with a 'very nice' French Moroccan family to whom she had sent a specially baked loaf of rye bread.

Obviously it is easier for those Poles who live in tourist destinations such as Warsaw, Wrocław or Lublin to meet and refresh their acquaintance with foreigners, particularly when, as in all the above-mentioned cases, this is convivial contact, often at home. Additionally, migration experience can serve to support projects for Polish cities to rediscover and memorialise their multi-ethnic past. Galent and Kubicki (2010, 223), writing about Wrocław, observe that 'it is very characteristic that most of the "new urban middle class" started discovering the German heritage of the city relatively recently and often after the experience of living in other cities'. They quote

an interviewee who mentions, 'I had no idea about the history of Wrocław, I discovered it when I lived in Berlin, I was really shocked that everything was nearly the same' (Galent and Kubicki 2010, 230). They suggest that a significant share of inhabitants perceives the biggest and most Polish dynamic cities as vibrant and to some extent cosmopolitan centres of culture (epitomised in the official tag, 'Wrocław the meeting place'), but also as part of transnational space. This transnational space is understood as a single European space with circulating cultural influences.

Some locals, however, do not have a stake in such projects (see, e.g. Fleming 2012 on Łódź). Wrocław, the 2016 European Capital of Culture, is also well known for its far-right activists. Moreover, an increased number of micropublics (see chapter 4) are marked by intolerance – micropublics such as far-right organisations and websites, where returnees can spread racism acquired abroad. Wiesław, whose comments on Sri Lankans were quoted above, was a barman, giving him ample opportunity to spread his views. The formation of a racist transnational social space was a phenomenon commented upon by Marek, a lecturer interviewed in Wrocław, reporting a conversation overheard after a nationalist youth march:

The daughter was explaining to her mother the issue of whether she should go abroad. And she said she'd like to go if only she didn't feel such a patriot (she was a nationalist here). But she'd heard that in the UK there were Polish nationalist groups and if she did migrate she'd join up with them. See what's happening! It's a bit of a paradox . . . . Even nationalists are happy to migrate so they can join up with other nationalists.

In other cases, return migrants or visitors might like to diffuse ideas about tolerance, but fail to do so because they anticipate resistance (Gara-pich 2016b). Residents sense a contrast between their local area and places abroad – although they can often extend the contrast beyond the local area to 'Poland' as a whole, as in the following statement by Jan, aged 25, a returnee from Sweden and other countries to Limanowa: 'I like the way of life abroad. Here in Poland it's a tiny bit intolerant, of course you can't generalise, but we have a slightly different mentality'. Particularly for LGBT people, location in Poland can be very significant. Marek, a return migrant from London to Poznań and then Warsaw (interviewed in English) made the following observation:

In England, yeah, people are open-minded, tolerant, and I'm thinking other, more sincere, open. You can speak what you think. In

Poland, no, oh no, no! . . . Poznań is quite safe and tolerant place; there are some gay clubs, but in Poland the most safe and good place to live for the guy is Warsaw . . . It's better than it was and it's changing year by year. Young people are tolerant, but older they're thinking something strange. My grandmother still thinks that gay are like *krasnaly* 'dwarves', my family don't know about me, no, cos I know what they think about that.

Finally, it is hard to avoid the impression that shallow, rather than deep cosmopolitanism, is a common outcome of migration experience. People who generalise on the basis of their own migration experience, even when trying to avoid stereotypes, nonetheless often hold certain essentialist assumptions that national character is inborn and unchanging. It is normal for non-social scientists to believe that national character 'really exists' in some objective way. In the words of Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008, 539), these are 'taken-for-granted understandings of the nation . . . understandings of the nation cloaked by the fog of common sense'.

ROBERT (AGED 34, LUBLIN): I was curious and I tried to observe everything . . . I don't want to generalise about all Dutch people, but those I knew, and I knew quite a big group . . . [He describes some characteristics]

ANNE: But do you think there is a Polish culture and a Dutch culture, a Polish way of behaving and a Dutch one? Perhaps there is something in common?

ROBERT: I don't see any similarities. Europe, yes. The Christian cultural area. Protestantism in Holland, Catholicism in Poland. Dutch people don't go to church much. We always go. Anything in common? [thinks] I didn't see similarities. Perhaps I'm mistaken. But *similarities*? . . . Out of curiosity, do you see any similarities between England and Poland?

Dorota, another 34-year-old well-educated Lublin interviewee, mentioned that she was ashamed of Poles in the United Kingdom, adding: 'But I also saw all the vices (*przywary*) of other nations! English people's laziness, and dirt, and food wasting. The hastiness and carelessness of Syrians, the chaos, lots of different things, French self-absorption, each nation something. But each has splendid features too.' It is hardly surprising to find that common sense essentialism inhibits acceptance of hybridity and understanding of the interconnectedness between people, irrespective of their ethno-national belonging. In fact, this may well be particularly



characteristic of well-educated returnees who prided themselves, while abroad, in finding out about different ‘mentalities’.

#### 4. Religion: Polish trends

Church attendance and self-declared religiosity<sup>11</sup> in Poland are high compared with elsewhere in Europe. Surveys indicate a slight decline in some dimensions of religiosity since EU accession in 2004, although over 90 per cent of Poles in Poland continue to believe in God: 92 per cent in 2014 compared with 96 per cent in 2005 (Boguszewski 2015a, 37). Most go to church at least once a month, though weekly church attendance has become a minority habit since about 2000, with self-reported attendance standing in 2015 at 47 per cent. According to European Values Survey data, 92 per cent of Poles in 2012 identified as Roman Catholics, though people under 30 were slightly less likely to do so (90 per cent).<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, they are more dogmatic, being more likely than middle-aged people to believe that ‘the only acceptable (*słuszna*) religion is my religion’ (36 per cent in 2012).<sup>13</sup>

However, Poles increasingly consider their faith to be their own affair, not needing mediation by the Church, with 52 per cent in 2014 agreeing that ‘I am a believer in my own way’, an impressive increase of 20 percentage points since 2005. Only 39 per cent stated that ‘I am a believer and I adhere to the Church’s teachings’ (cf. 66 per cent in 2005) (Boguszewski 2015a, 40). More people now believe one can be religious without attending church (Marody and Mandes 2012, 198), and an increasing majority, while remaining opposed to rights for sexual minorities, do not observe the Church’s teachings on sex, birth control and divorce, and would like the Church to revise them (Roguska 2015). To some extent they also celebrate commercialised ‘new’ and non-religious holidays, imported from the West, such as Hallowe’en and Valentine’s Day. However, Łaciak (2015, 54–8) reports hostile opinions towards these holidays among the Arcimowicz, Bieńko and Łaciak (2015) survey respondents. The exception was Chełmno, one of the fieldwork sites. Here, interviewees enthusiastically supported the town’s recent efforts, with EU funds, to rebrand itself as a town for lovers, taking advantage of local relics of St. Valentine.

National averages are unhelpful for understanding religiosity in geographically divided Poland, since religious adherence is much higher outside large cities and in the east. Nine out of ten inhabitants of Podkarpackie attend church at least once a month, compared with half in West

Pomerania, or in cities of over 500,000 (Czapiński 2015a, 267). However, only a minority even of villagers (19 per cent) and right-wing voters (27 per cent) uncritically accept the Church's moral teachings (2013 figures, Grabowska 2015c, 159).

Norris and Inglehart (2004, 131) argue that 'there has been a long-term decline of religiosity across succeeding generations in post-Communist Europe' as societies become more affluent and secure, but they also argue that this decline is less marked in some countries: 'It is the more homogenous religious cultures, exemplified by the role of Catholicism in Poland, which have best-preserved faith in God and habitual church attendance.' If Norris and Inglehart are correct that religious homogeneity is a key factor perpetuating faith in God and church attendance in Poland, one might expect exposure to religious variety abroad, as a result of mass migration since 2004, to weaken this trend.

## 5. Migration influences on religion in Poland

Polish migration to more secularised countries in western Europe has an impact on sections of the Catholic Church, in the sense that it promotes alarm – alarm about encroaching materialism, about permissiveness, about atheism, and about a general loss of Polish identity. A study of Church documents and press releases from 2006 to 2013 uncovered consistent and comprehensive condemnation of migration; only twice did senior Church figures refer to its positive effects (Lisak 2015, 118–9). Globally, migration does not in itself have a predictable effect on religiosity. Many migrants maintain their religious beliefs unchanged, some become less practising, and in some cases less believing, while others find religion becoming more important to them. One would expect the same to be true of Poles, although Mole et al. (2017) and Röder and Lubbers (2015), regarding Poles in the United Kingdom, Ireland and the Netherlands, suggest some increase in religious practice over time spent abroad. Religiosity among Poles abroad is discussed in [chapter 9](#). The main argument is that religious belief seems to become more individualised and privatised as church attendance declines and as Poles become more familiar with other faiths or simply with different versions of Roman Catholicism.

If one accepts Grabowska's (2015b) argument that the most important religious trend is that belief and church attendance continue to be high overall in Poland, then a search for migration influences should presumably concentrate on reasons why migration helps maintain these still

impressive numbers. It is not hard to find such reasons. Many Poles abroad have ample opportunities to maintain transnational ties and lead a 'Polish' life, without having to engage with non-Polish variants of religious practice. Those who do not attend church often have practical motivations. All in all, it seems probable that many Polish return migrants have not found their faith disturbed. This is why they attend church as normal after they return, and their return maintains the proportion of practising religious people in the local population. Moreover, people often come back to rural and small-town locations where social sanctions for non-attendance at church remain strong, and it is easiest simply to slot back into old habits, as suggested by my interviews and observations and, for example, by Grabowska, Garapich, et al. (2017) and Krasnodebska (2012, 132). In their study of three small towns, Grabowska, Garapich, et al. (2017, 92) contrast Pszczyna, where 'lapsed Catholics or agnostics openly declared that they no longer practice their Catholic religion', with Trzebnica and Sokółka, where return migrants seemed to be under more pressure to conform. For example, in Trzebnica neighbours were unwelcoming when children who had returned from the United Kingdom tried to go trick-or-treating on Hallowe'en (Grabowska, Garapich, et al. 2017, 165).

Nonetheless, even in the most Catholic parts of Poland the trend is towards condoning behaviour that does not conform to strict Catholic teachings on family life. One reason is the pragmatic acceptance of migration as a livelihood strategy, even if this means going against traditional gender norms. 55 per cent of respondents in my 2008 opinion poll in Podkarpacie agreed that it was acceptable for lone mothers in financial difficulties to temporarily leave their children to work abroad (White 2017, 69). The value accorded to higher education in contemporary Poland trumps conventions about mothers not migrating and led interviewees to condone migration to pay for adult children's education. Individual female interviewees expressed the view that women, including themselves, should take advantage of opportunities to work abroad even at the expense of their wifely roles.

If I . . . can't find work . . . and because my husband [a coach driver] is hardly ever at home . . . I'll get my mother-in-law [a cleaner in Germany] to fix something up . . . My husband isn't keen on it. Even though he's not at home a lot, he prefers me to be there when he is! (Luiza, Limanowa)

## 6. Conclusion

Galent and Kubicki (2010, 217), describing Poland soon after EU accession, made the following argument:

Polish urban centres are going through a much more dynamic process of social change than the population of smaller towns and villages, where a multicultural environment and pluralism is present only via stereotypical images and where cultural or social strangeness is still seen through the prism of threat, whereas in the case of urban culture this heterogeneity and strangeness are associated with such positive meanings such as creativity and innovation.

Considering the mass exposure to foreign countries of smaller towns and villages in recent years, it seems that Galent and Kubicki's analysis may now be out of date. Of course, cities, especially the largest ones, have a particularly high share of well-educated, well-travelled, well-off and liberal inhabitants, so it is hardly surprising if cities also score highly on indicators of openness. Their residents also have more opportunities than most Poles to rub shoulders with foreigners in Poland. Nonetheless, as argued in [chapter 7](#), migration also has a levelling role. Given the right type of conditions abroad, migration experience can shape more tolerant attitudes towards diversity, even among small-town residents and villagers, and even among working-class urban Poles who might not otherwise have much exposure to difference. This is particularly the case in some 'super-diverse' cities abroad, where there is no dominant ethnic group, and in convivial settings where Poles and others spend time together enjoyably. As direct, lived experiences, these can leave a strong impression on migrants and visiting stayers, supporting Kuhn's (2012) assertion that less educated people become more open to difference mostly as the result of personal experiences. In some cases their attitudes can be classed as 'deep cosmopolitanism', since they include a 'recognition of interconnectedness' – for example, when they reject racism because they encounter it abroad, so can put themselves in the shoes of others. Migration therefore serves as an 'eye-opener' for individual members of social groups who, as a majority, often show up as intolerant in survey data.

Although such limited survey evidence as exists tends to support the idea that Polish migrants are more likely than not to acquire more open-to-difference attitudes abroad, and although the massive recent increase in English-language knowledge makes Poles well placed to get

to know and understand foreign cultures, of course it is important not to exaggerate trends towards openness in Poland. Many of the changes towards more tolerance captured in Polish national survey data are quite small scale, and there are also counter-trends. Migration (particularly when migrants have difficult experiences abroad, for example in their workplaces, or have little meaningful contact with local people) can also support the spread of intolerance. Since few Poles would argue that migration is economically harmful for individual households, anti-migration discourse in Poland naturally focuses on cultural threats to national identity, which can reinforce racism and homophobia brought back to Poland by return migrants and their visitors.

Religion, too, is often associated with socially conservative opinions, although religiosity in Poland is changing, particularly in some locations. When return migrants who have lost the habit of church attendance abroad return to a large Polish city or a region such as West Pomerania, they are more able to continue not to attend church regularly than if they return to a village or one of the more religious regions of eastern Poland. Overall, it seems, religious belief, partly as a result of migration and exposure to religious difference abroad, is becoming more personalised and less mediated by the Catholic Church. Hence it should not be assumed that continuing high levels of self-identification as Catholics among Poles equates to agreement with the more intolerant views expressed by some priests, or is a barrier to the adoption of more tolerant attitudes to diversity.

Overall, this chapter has illustrated once again how helpful it is to apply the insights of receiving country scholarship to understand the impact of migration on sending countries. It also illustrates again the diversity of 'Poland'. On the one hand, openness to difference cannot be understood without reference to socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender and level of education. On the other hand, trends in religiosity have to be understood in the context of geography.

## Notes

- 1 A Pew Research Center survey (2017, 43) conducted in the second half of 2015 found that 57 per cent agreed and 34 per cent disagreed that 'it is better for us if society consists of people from the same nationality, and who have the same religion and culture'.
- 2 Preparedness to house refugees in Poland had also dipped in the mid-1990s, but had been rising since 1996 (Hall and Mikulska-Jolles 2016, 4–5). However, the refugee flows (resulting mostly from the wars in Chechnya) and the international political situation were very different in the 1990s, making the periods hard to compare. CBOS surveys show Poles are readier to accept Ukrainian refugees than non-Europeans. For more discussion, see [chapter 10](#).

- 3 See, e.g. Mau, Mewes and Zimmermann (2008) and Kuhn (2015). Unfortunately 'transnational' is used slightly differently by different scholars.
- 4 Those with over 500,000 population: Warsaw, Kraków, Łódź, Wrocław and Poznań. Gołębiowska (2014, 24–5) comments that 'previous research consistently finds that subgroup differences in tolerance are related to one's area of residence, but little is known about why these differences occur. The principal explanation for the link is that a greater proportion of urban residents report greater openness to diversity because they have greater opportunities for exposure to diversity'.
- 5 See, for example, Omyła-Rudzka (2017, 8) on attitudes to other nations, and Omyła-Rudzka (2015, 7) on whether it is possible to have two home countries. In the latter case, young respondents were also especially likely to agree that it was.
- 6 Respondents were aged 17–21, in formal education. Unfortunately the questions about tolerance in 2013 and 2016 were not the same as had been asked in the previous study, Youth 2008 (CBOS 2009).
- 7 The assumption that cosmopolitanism is a feature only of elites is also linked to the somewhat different understanding of 'cosmopolitan' as someone participating in elite consumption practices.
- 8 German, however, has slightly declined, as indicated in the sources referenced in this section.
- 9 2005 was the first year that *Diagnoza Społeczna* gathered data on language competency, and their report presents 'active and passive knowledge' as one combined figure.
- 10 School curriculums in some countries are more geared towards teaching tolerance of diversity, and Gołębiowska (2014, 19–20) argues that Poland has not been a leader in this respect.
- 11 Borowik (2010, 273) argues that if Polish respondents answered surveys more honestly, levels of religiosity in Poland would seem comparable with those in other Catholic European countries such as Spain, Ireland and Italy.
- 12 Question V144.
- 13 EVS Question V154. <30:36.4%, 30–49:25.3%, >50:45.5%. This question was not asked in previous surveys.

# Polish society abroad

ANNE WHITE

## 1. Introduction

This chapter argues that one result of migration from Poland in recent years is the formation of ‘Polish society abroad’. Society abroad is not a unique historical phenomenon. In the Polish case it is foreshadowed by early twentieth-century Polish society in the United States, analysed by Thomas and Znaniecki in *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918–20, 1984). However, ‘society’ would not be a suitable label for other Poles abroad, such as refugees from World War II and the communist regime. They could better be described as a diaspora, according to criteria discussed in [chapter 3](#), since many were characterised by a strong collective ethos, a ‘passionate commitment to remaining Polish’ ([Temple 2001](#), 389) and a sense of exile from the homeland ([Burrell 2006](#); [Lehr 2015](#); [Sword 1996](#); [Sword, Davies and Ciechanowski 1989](#)). They were also much more separate from Polish society in Poland. As late as the 1980s, many Poles abroad maintained a strong anti-communist identity. They took a keen interest in the Solidarity movement and its suppression, sending aid to Poles in Poland ([Burrell 2002](#), 66–7). The impression of a united anti-communist Polishness was perpetuated by diaspora organisations that spoke on behalf of fellow Poles, though many younger Poles assimilated into the receiving societies and often referred to their parents as living in a ‘time warp’ ([Sword 1996](#), 216). Today, Polish society in foreign countries such as the United Kingdom can be considered to some degree a microcosm of Polish society in Poland, even if it also has specific local characteristics.

Since migrants are not usually referred to as ‘societies’, the term needs justification. I explain why it might be less misleading than other

terms, and, if used carefully and not too literally, provide an analytical lens. Previous chapters have mentioned how social change occurs among Poles abroad, and the circulation of influences between Polish society in Poland and elsewhere. However, the focus in those chapters was on individual migrants as social remitters. The term 'Polish society abroad' is a guide to understanding these phenomena collectively.

The chapter is not about social change in receiving societies, although this has an impact on Poles abroad, most obviously when hostility is directed at migrants, as in Ireland and the United Kingdom following the 2008 global economic crisis and the ensuing austerity policies. Nor does the chapter discuss the impact of Poles on receiving societies, since this is not within our remit. Such impacts can be significant, ranging from indirect political consequences such as Britain's exit from the EU to more inconspicuous changes in practice, which constitute social remittances and deserve further research. One example would be the reversal in the decline of breastfeeding in Ireland. This is a direct result of migration and the high rates of breastfeeding among Poles and other EU migrants (Brick and Nolan 2014), which increases the share of breastfeeding mothers in Irish society. Qualitative research is needed to show whether there is cultural diffusion as Polish practices spread among ethnic Irish women. Polish grandmothers on birth visits encourage their daughters in Ireland to breastfeed (Kerrins, Share and Williams 2016), but does the example of Polish women breastfeeding encourage ethnic Irish mothers to do the same? Do Polish mothers support Irish friends who are also mothers to continue breastfeeding?

This chapter discusses why Poles living abroad today can be considered part of 'Polish society', and analyses the particular characteristics of Polish society abroad. Poles abroad today are often believed, and sometimes seem to be, more liberal, less religious and more individualistic than Poles in Poland. They are therefore sometimes seen as 'less Polish' by Poles who have a normative view of Polish identity as Catholic, unique and not combinable with other identities. Poles living abroad have to take into account such expectations, so they do influence the nature of the Polish migrant experience, as discussed in this chapter. However, if we view Polish migrants abroad in a different way, as mobile members of two or several modern European societies, people whose mobile and migrant identities are often more significant than their Polishness, we gain a better sense of what Polish society abroad is like. First, rather than seeing it as more individualistic, it would be better to see it as offering more choice of lifestyles and livelihoods. Second, it is important to look beneath shared nationality and see internal differences within the Polish population



abroad based on cultural capital, income, age, gender, sexual orientation and place of residence. Agency and mobility are not distributed equally among Polish migrants, and intersections between Polish and other identities crucially affect the nature of society abroad.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 2 discusses contours of the ‘society abroad’ concept. Section 3 briefly describes an alternative approach, constructing typologies of Polish migrants, which was appropriate when the recent migration wave began, but which is now outdated. Section 4 investigates the idea that Polish society abroad is socio-demographically a microcosm of Polish society in Poland, although to some extent differently stratified. Section 5 examines migration as escape from social control, but considers how nonetheless Poles are conscious of the gaze of other Poles abroad. Section 6 discusses the Catholic Church and, more generally, the changing Polish cultural spaces spanning Poland and foreign countries. These often have typically migrant rather than Polish features; for example, the already sizeable body of post-2004 Polish migrant fiction can be seen as a subsection of global migrant literature. Finally, Section 7 examines how ‘diaspora’ organisations and institutions evolve and how new organisations, institutions and networks emerge that are typical for ‘society abroad’ – society which, as I have argued, is socio-demographically complex and tightly tied both to Poland and the receiving country. This includes social movements that span borders, actively working for social change in Poland.

## 2. The concept of ‘society abroad’

As this book has shown, there is a social space encompassing Poland and other countries, in particular popular destinations such as Ireland, Norway, Germany and the United Kingdom. To draw a sharp line at the state borders of Poland would be artificial, considering how often Poles communicate with friends and family across borders, or visit Poland or foreign countries for healthcare (Goodwin, Polek and Goodwin 2013; Osipovic 2013), shopping, and so on, or swap their places of residence between Poland and foreign countries, despite an overall trend towards settlement in western Europe (White 2017, 237–40). Polish migrants often possess a sense of living lives in ‘Poland’ despite being far away. As described in chapter 7, stayers in Poland also feel they are living their own lives partly in foreign countries. In many cases Polish migrants resemble commuters. For example, Main (2016a, 75) describes how a woman based in Berlin, ‘who has two small children, went every month for a week or two to visit

her parents in Poznań. She laughed that she visited them more often than her brother living in Warsaw.'

Empirical research suggests that most first-generation Poles abroad consider themselves Polish, even if they redefine what that means (e.g. Kempny 2010; Kusek 2015; Ryan 2010; White 2017; Wojtyńska 2011). They are positioning themselves as individuals in relation to some wider Polish entity. They often feel distant towards the Polish state (Fiń et al. 2013), so this wider entity is the Polish nation. Their Polishness is a *social identity*, so it might seem obvious to see them as part of the society of their nation-state. A longitudinal survey among UK Poles asked directly whether respondents considered themselves on a four-point scale a 'member of Polish society'; average agreement was 2.87 in 2007 (when respondents had been in the United Kingdom under three months) rising to 3.17 in 2009 (Goodwin 2009). However, this survey was unusual: methodological nationalism, which still prevails in the social sciences, leads to the assumption that the geographical bounds of a society are the nation-state's borders. The convention is therefore that migrants are no longer members of their societies of origin. Thomas and Znaniecki, the pioneers of qualitative migration research, claimed, for example, that 'the immigrant is no longer a member of the society from which he came, since he lives in the midst of American society' (1918–20, 1984, 239). This has generally been assumed to be true by subsequent generations of scholars.

With regard to membership of the receiving society, Kucharczyk (2013, 10), in his introduction to a groundbreaking study of Polish civil society in the United Kingdom, argues that 'Poles are becoming an integral part of the fabric of British society'. Nonetheless, migrants usually find it hard to gain acceptance as full members, at least not until they acquire citizenship. There is an expectation among scholars, policymakers and ordinary people that non-naturalised immigrants, who live outside the borders of their nation-state but are not full members of the receiving society, should be grouped under some extra-societal ethnonational minority label. It is not so clear how to label such minority groups. Migrants are often assumed by themselves and others to belong to a 'community' or 'diaspora'. Both terms imply groups with tight interpersonal ties and a strong sense of common identity, based on ethnicity. In the United Kingdom, the usual term is 'ethnic communities'. In countries and localities where multiculturalism is practised, official policy is to help ethnic communities nest comfortably within the receiving society. In other places, where there is pressure to assimilate, migrant populations may feel collectively excluded from the mainstream, which can enhance a sense of shared collective identity (Portes and Sessenbrenner 1993). However,

as [chapter 3](#) demonstrated, a strong sense of collective identity among co-ethnics abroad should not be taken for granted. The term ‘diaspora’ (and by extension also ‘community’) tends to represent an ideal type rather than reality ([Morawska 2011](#)), and empirical evidence suggests that migrants from CEE in western Europe today do not form actual diasporas.

Poles commonly distinguish between ‘Poles’ (in Poland, or just visiting abroad) and ‘Polonia’ (Poles living permanently abroad).<sup>1</sup> However, it seems strange to use a term that implies that a Pole in Berlin is part of the same community as a Pole in Melbourne, but lives a separate life from Poles in Poznań. Moreover, there is so much repeated and temporary migration, of indeterminate length, and it is so hard to say what counts as ‘settling’, that ‘living’ and ‘visiting’ abroad are often hard to distinguish. Given the realities of mobility and transnational existences today, common sense and empirical evidence suggest that migrants cannot be neatly sorted away from Poland and into some ‘community’, ‘diaspora’ or ‘Polonia’ box.

Garapich (2013, 20–3) argues that Polish communities (as he terms them – *społeczności*) outside Poland today form an intrinsic component of Polish society as a whole. Discussing Polish sociologist Marody’s paradigm of ‘three Polands’ – privatised Poland, state Poland and Poland on welfare benefits – Garapich suggests that a fourth Poland is ‘Poland in migration’. Hence the impact of contemporary migration on already existing Polish populations abroad is also part of the consequences of migration for ‘Poland’. Rakowski similarly notes (2016, 38) that a group unmentioned in Marody’s paradigm is ‘those unemployed who take farming and construction jobs in the EU countries’. Dunin-Wąsowicz (2013, 101–2) refers to post-accession migration as a ‘fluid and dynamic social phenomenon of transnational dimensions which “happens” between Poland and the UK’.

Although ‘Poland in migration’ is a helpful concept, especially if the purpose is to position this population vis-à-vis Poles in Poland, I prefer ‘Polish society abroad’ for several reasons. First, ‘Poland in migration’ seems to privilege Poles’ migrant identities. While these are important, nonetheless it is questionable whether they are of paramount importance in all situations, especially as people settle abroad. Using the term ‘Polish society abroad’ helps avoid seeing individual Polish people primarily as migrants. Second, using the word ‘society’ draws our attention to the social locations of Poles abroad – the social structures and power relations that to some extent shape people’s lives, such as a sense of social pressure from other Poles. Thinking sociologically also suggests the need to consider processes of ‘resocialisation’ ([Mole et al. 2017](#)) that may occur under the

influence of both the receiving society and co-ethnics abroad. Third, and bringing the discussion back to the main approach adopted in this book, using the term ‘Polish society abroad’ sheds light on the lives of Poles abroad by using information from Polish sociology about Polish society in Poland.

### 3. The stage of typology making, 2004–13

Around the time of Poland’s EU accession, UK-based researchers tended to sort Polish migrants into specific *migrant types* rather than seeing the phenomenon as Polish society arriving in the United Kingdom. The most popular typology, devised by Garapich (Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich 2007), divided Poles into ‘hamsters’, or target earners on one-off visits; ‘storks’, or circular migrants; ‘stayers’, intending to remain for the long term, though perhaps retiring to Poland; and, the largest category, ‘searchers’, or those with flexible plans. In other words, Poles in the United Kingdom were viewed not as a microcosm of Polish society in Poland but in terms of their migration motives and intentions. These did, however, imply a certain socio-demographic baggage, particularly with reference to social class and age. Young and well-educated people, in particular, fell mostly into the ‘searcher’ category. Luthra, Platt and Salamowska (2014), using the term ‘migrant classes’, applied a similar typology to the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands. They identified student, family and ‘adventurer’ types alongside the circular, temporary and settled labour migrants.<sup>2</sup> Other scholars, writing about different countries, have advocated slightly different typologies. Engbersen et al. (2013), for example, taking as their point of departure the strength of migrants’ transnational ties, identified ‘bi-nationals’, settlers, ‘footloose’ and circular migrants in the Netherlands.

Typologies can be useful analytical tools, especially for small-scale qualitative research, but they are inherently problematic because they accentuate boundaries between individuals, however much their creators explain that individual migrants cross from group to group. Typologies tend to privilege certain clusters of identities (e.g. ‘flexible university graduate’, ‘poorly integrated seasonal worker’). By contrast, for example, Main (2016a, 66), writing about Berlin and Barcelona, suggests that

a combination of expectations and aspirations make up migration motivations, which in the case of Polish women migrating to Berlin and Barcelona have been found to centre on education, relationships,

employment and a desire for adventure. The four are not mutually exclusive, rather the dimensions are differently accentuated in individuals' own life stories.

Similarly, I found that mothers with little education from small towns, on the face of it 'typical labour migrants', often displayed a hedonistic and adventurous streak, despite the fact that they framed their migration decisions as being for the good of their families (White 2010a). Szczygielska (2013, 226) found similar mixed attitudes among her middle-aged women migrants from Starachowice,<sup>3</sup> as did Małek in her 2011 study of women working in Italy.

Even if typologies were helpful in understanding migration to the United Kingdom circa 2004, they have outlived their usefulness. Many Poles are now more or less settled, in the United Kingdom and other West European countries, so thinking of them primarily by original migration intentions is unhelpful. Moreover, typologies cannot capture their many intersecting identities. These are better analysed using standard sociological approaches. Many analysts of Polish migration in recent years almost entirely avoid typologies, preferring, for example, to follow Bourdieu (e.g. Garapich 2016c; Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Nowicka 2013). They explain migrants' different trajectories with reference to their possession of varying, mutually transferable economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. Partly in connection with this social capital approach, there has been a tendency to see Polish society abroad as consisting of networks, linking Poles to each other and to the receiving society (e.g. Bell 2016; Gill and Bialski 2011; Ryan 2016; Toruńczyk-Ruiz 2008), as well as, less often, to the sending country (e.g. Nowicka and Krzyżowski 2017; White and Ryan 2008).

Divisions within migrant populations are sometimes unnoticed by receiving country analysts, but when migrant populations produce their own sociologists and anthropologists these shine a light on stratification and hierarchies. This has happened in the case of Polish migration to the United Kingdom, which in the past few years has produced its own 'Polish social scientists abroad' (White 2016c). A social anthropological approach is more common in this extensive scholarship than a focus on overarching social structures, with a more qualitative approach to sociology than is common in Poland (Bucholc 2016). However, Polish sociology in Poland is also changing in a more qualitative direction, partly thanks to transnational influences.

## 4. Polish society in the United Kingdom and other countries as a microcosm of society in Poland

This section discusses some statistical information, although statistics with regard to shifting populations are by nature inaccurate. This is especially true considering that Poles commonly do not deregister from their place of residence in Poland; use informal networks to migrate abroad; and in some countries, notably the United Kingdom, do not need to register when they arrive.

The size of the Polish population in countries such as the United Kingdom, where Labour Force Survey data suggest that 984,000 Polish nationals lived in the first quarter of 2016 (Hawkins and Moses 2016, 3), is a particular reason to use the term ‘Polish society abroad’. By contrast, it would not be helpful to talk about Polish ‘society’ in countries, such as New Zealand, where there are small numbers of Poles (Goodwin 2017). In addition, geographical dispersion within the main receiving countries means that even if the word ‘community’ were used, it would have to be in the plural. For example, Poles are scattered across Iceland, inhabiting even the remotest areas (Raczyński 2015, 46); the same is true of Ireland (Bojarczuk and Mühlau 2018, 102) and the United Kingdom (Harris, Moran and Bryson 2012, 212; ONS 2011<sup>4</sup>). Okólski and Salt (2014, 12) write that ‘the varied geography of the movement, affecting regions and communities not normally associated with immigration as well as the common honeypots like London, has made for a rich tapestry of analysis’. Poles in the United Kingdom find themselves in a country characterised by even higher levels of regional inequality than Poland (Herbst 2012, 50), directly affecting their opportunity structures and life chances (see, e.g. Knight, Lever and Thompson 2014 or 2017 on different locations in Wales). Moreover, complex patterns of ethnic diversity, intertwined with different levels of economic deprivation, infrastructure and politics and different local histories of race relations (Robinson 2010), create a ‘rich tapestry’ whereby locations vary in terms of the mix of conflict and conviviality between ethnic groups (Karner and Parker 2011). As a result, migrants are made to feel welcome to very different degrees in different locations, as evidenced by local results of the Brexit referendum in June 2016. In turn, different locations can influence Polish migrants’ changing attitudes towards ethnic diversity.

UK Polish society is a cross-section of Polish society in Poland, in the sense that Poles originate from all over Poland. This is illustrated, for example, in Nestorowicz’s (2010) analysis of the Polish population of

Glasgow (Anacka et al. 2011, 125). Such diversity reflects the wider trend towards international migration occurring from all Polish regions (Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski 2009, 107; Kostrzewa and Szałtys 2013, 52), although migration from the biggest cities was most marked in the period around EU accession (Czapiński 2015a, 244).

People from opposite corners of Poland are thrown together so that, paradoxically, it is often by coming to the United Kingdom that they appreciate the complexities of Polish society in Poland. Kempny describes how she had to rethink her assumptions about 'Polish culture' when she encountered the claim that there were 13 dishes at Christmas dinner from another migrant in Belfast (2012, 48). I personally witnessed an argument between residents of Gryfice and Katowice who asserted that Halloween trick-or-treating was respectively commonplace and unknown in 'Poland'.

Also striking is the increasing socio-demographic diversity of Polish people in the United Kingdom. In some other countries, the Polish population has more specific socio-demographic features. In particular, Poles in Italy have traditionally been mostly female carers, though the population has become more diverse recently.<sup>5</sup> With regard to the United Kingdom, it is often suggested that immediately after EU accession, Polish migration was also fairly selective, with young university graduates disproportionately well represented. Okólski and Salt (2014, 21) observe that 'in the post-accession period, a stylised portrait of a Polish migrant heading for the UK is that of a young male, highly educated, and originating from an urban area'. However, this is just a 'stylised portrait', since university graduates were never the majority (Okólski and Salt 2014, 18). The most significant change between 2004 and 2017 is that more older Poles have come to the United Kingdom, although the average age is naturally lower than among Poles in Poland. In 2016, around 69 per cent of people born in Poland living in the United Kingdom were aged 25–49, and a quarter were aged 30–34 (Hawkins and Moses 2016, 6).

Family reunification in the United Kingdom became a mass phenomenon soon after 2004 (White 2017), and, with a few years' delay, in Ireland (Bojarczuk and Mühlau 2018, 102), Norway (Friberg 2012) and other destinations. As discussed in chapter 6, the birth rate among Poles in Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom is higher than in Poland. This connects to the fact that in Poland couples put off childbearing, or decide against having more than one child, for economic reasons (Galbraith 2008; Kotowska et al. 2008, 826; Prorok 2015; Staszyńska 2008, 54). In Poland, it seems that, among the youngest age groups, it is the less educated women who are least likely to give birth or aspire to having more than one child (Gromada 2016, 13). The trend is different in the United

Kingdom and Ireland, where couples feel sufficiently financially secure to have more children (Heath, McGhee and Trevena 2015; Klimek 2017).

As discussed in chapter 6, the most basic social unit, the Polish family, is often transnational, and this is one of the strongest arguments for considering 'Polish society' to exist abroad. Poles have caring duties in other countries, and socialisation is a transnational matter, as 'floating grandmothers' (Bojarczuk and Mühlau 2018, 103), sisters and other relatives based in Poland help to bring up Polish children living abroad, through frequent visits or by receiving children in Poland during the holidays. Poles living abroad also have caring duties towards their own parents. Krzyżowski (2013), for example, writes about Poles in Iceland and Austria caring for older parents in Poland, such as by helping organise their medical care. He illustrates that differences between the receiving countries influence this culture of care: social remittances occur because Polish society in Iceland has acquired more faith in institutional care from Icelanders, contrasting with the expectation of family caregiving in Austria and Poland. As Kordasiewicz and her co-authors make clear, it is not simply the case that a Polish demographic trend (its ageing society) is exacerbated by migration; rather, Polish society (both generations, located in Poland and abroad) is having to rethink caring practices as 'cultures of care of countries of origin and destination intertwine' (Kordasiewicz, Radziwinowiczówna and Kloc-Nowak 2018, 89).

Poles in countries such as the United Kingdom also represent a cross-section of society in Poland, in the sense that they are increasingly diverse occupationally. Poles have penetrated the entire economy, and every level of income and occupation is represented, though many Poles performed humbler jobs immediately after their arrival in the United Kingdom. The 2011 census showed 10 per cent of Polish-born people in managerial or professional positions (Haynes and Galasińska 2016, 50–1). Upward social mobility, which may be hard to achieve today in Poland (Domański, Pokropek and Żółtak 2015) is also an expectation and to some extent a reality among Poles in the United Kingdom (see esp. Eade, Drinkwater and Garapich 2007; Gałka 2016; Haynes and Galasińska 2016; Parutis 2011). Nonetheless, it seems that on average Poles in Britain and Ireland still work below their qualifications (Kaczmarczyk and Tyrowicz 2015; Voitchovsky 2014).

However, interviewees often express a pragmatic attitude: money, not status in the foreign society, is the key consideration. The important thing is to feel comfortably off relative to how you were in Poland. For example, Jerzy, a bus driver I interviewed in Bath in 2012, observed, 'Here, if someone wants to work, I've noticed, as an ordinary bus driver, even if



it's a low status job (*zawód taki niski*) you can live, you have money to pay the bills, go on holiday, if you want to work. In Poland it's a hard job, low paid.' Marzena, a return migrant, interviewed in Wrocław, who had lived in Bristol, described a friend who had been cleaning in the United Kingdom for 10 years, commenting, 'She comes from a small town where there aren't any prospects – so in England, as a cleaner, she is "somebody"'.

Migration offers opportunities for travel, for example, which people did not always enjoy when they lived in Poland. Malwina moved from a small town to Bristol and commented in 2009: 'We've been to Cardiff, to Weymouth, down there, everywhere around Bristol, we've been to all the sights . . . Me, my husband and our daughter. Or sometimes with our friends, taking two or three cars . . . I want to see things . . . In Poland I haven't visited lots of places. This is my chance.' Poles can expect that by working in the United Kingdom they will achieve a 'normal' life (Galasińska and Kozłowska 2009), as opposed to the 'abnormality' that characterised their previous lives in Poland. (Fehérváry (2002) describes similar attitudes in Hungary). Comparisons are not just made with previous lives, since – as discussed in chapter 3 – status is often also enhanced in the sense that many labour migrants feel upwardly mobile relative to their contacts who still live in the country of origin (Garapich 2016c, 166, 187).

By contrast, some newly arrived educated Poles prefer to emphasise their status vis-à-vis other Poles abroad, reproducing class borders brought from Poland. Galent, Goddeeris and Niedźwiedzki (2009, 40–1, 88–9), found that Polish students in Leuven, like the students in London interviewed by Andrejuk (2011), constructed boundaries between themselves and labour migrants and denied they had anything in common with Polish workers. By contrast, working-class Poles stressed what united them with other local Poles, for instance living in low-quality housing, or attending mass together. Pawlak (2016, 64) reports similar 'othering' by professional Poles of manual workers in Oslo. Among other examples, Elgenius (2017, 276–7) quotes a banker in London: 'We have so much to offer: Polish people are clever and professional. I don't want them to think that we are all builders or manual workers'. In her article about Glasgow, Piętka (2011) comments on how her socially diverse interviewees reported social stratification and wariness of other Poles among the local Polish population to the extent that they could not be considered to constitute a singular 'community'.

Social stratification intersects with the stratification delimiting different migrant generations. Garapich, in his aptly titled book *London's Polish Borders* (2016c), argues that Polish professionals position themselves

within pre-existing hierarchies, associating themselves with the 1940s diaspora and their descendants, organisations and patriotic values. In turn, some of these established diaspora members have a tendency to 'other' the recent arrivals, whom they describe as 'backward' and 'post-communist' (Elgenius 2017, 268). Though it might be stretching terms to describe Polish society in the United Kingdom as being riven by class or generational conflict, there can be tensions, including between members of different generations of migrants (see, e.g. Bielewska 2012, on Manchester; Fomina 2009, on Bradford; Galasińska 2010a, on the Midlands). Anti-immigrant sentiment on the part of some second- and third-generation Poles testifies to how well they have imbibed certain 'Little British' attitudes. For example, the second-generation representative of a provincial Polish organisation complained to me in 2009, using British tabloid newspaper terminology, about the 'tsunami' of Poles arriving from Poland.

However, as already mentioned, recent Polish migrants are scattered across the United Kingdom, and this means they find themselves in many locations without pre-existing Polish communities. Several of my interviewees in the UK provinces noted the spirit of camaraderie that prevailed among small groups of pioneering migrants around 2004. In such locations, friendships with individual longer-established Poles could be eagerly embraced. Raczyński (2015, 118–9) notes a similar phenomenon: he states that, unlike in other Scandinavian countries, in Iceland there is no established Polish diaspora and therefore no tensions between different waves of migrants. As the number of Poles grows in foreign destinations, however, stratification and boundary drawing within the Polish population increase. Marzena, mentioned above, who lived in Poland but often went back to Bristol to visit, claimed that

there are people who earn more money and don't want to keep in touch with people who clean and build. Nowadays [in 2016] I see a distinct division. In the past, although some people wanted to be better, all the same they always kept together. There were fewer of them. Now there are lots and lots of them and there are definite sub-groups, like social strata.

Kusek (2015, 110), writing about professionals in London, suggests that the situation is rather one in which individual professional Poles occasionally interact with a 'Polish community' that consists largely of labour migrants:

Out of several characteristics shared by these participants, their low levels of interaction with non-professional Polish migrants was most interesting . . . The participants of my study indicated that, although they were familiar with the Polish neighborhoods in London, they saw themselves as customers rather than members of the core Polish migrant community. For example, Artur said: 'I visit a Polish community maybe twice a year: usually when I need my [car] oil changed I go to a Polish mechanic in Hammersmith.' Together, and in a generalised and simplified sense, the labor migrant and professional migrant communities create a micro-replica of the Polish society in the context of London itself, and draw from similarly distinct experiences from home.

Fomina (2009) similarly writes about the 'parallel worlds' of middle- and working-class Polish migrants in Bradford, while Toruńczyk-Ruiz (2008, 37) reports how in Amsterdam professional migrants are hardly aware of the presence of other Poles, although working-class Poles report, 'You don't feel that you are abroad, there are so many Poles'.

Social exclusion also marks parts of Polish society abroad. Cities such as Oslo (Mostowska 2013) and London (Garapich 2011) contain a homeless Polish population. Poles abroad, even officials, sometimes conflate homeless people and criminals (Garapich 2016c, 305). There is an opinion circulating in Poland that Polish criminals are disproportionately well represented among migrants. For example, Gorzelak (2008, 25) reports a key informant mentioning that his town had become more law abiding because 'the hooligans ["shaved heads"] have gone off to England'.

An intriguing but unanswerable question is how far Poles in certain foreign countries present a microcosm of Polish society in Poland in terms of attitudes and opinions. Election results that suggest, for example, an unusually high level of support for nationalist parties among Poles in the United Kingdom, are not helpful guides, because of low proportions registering and voting.<sup>6</sup> A study of Poles (n=172) who arrived in the United Kingdom in 2007, the year when the largest number came to Britain, found that on arrival they were less traditional and conformist and more focused on self-direction and having an 'exciting life' than the average young<sup>7</sup> Polish person, making them more like British people. After two years, their value for self-direction had increased still further and was higher than for British people. Bardi et al. (2014, 143–4) suggest this could be because 'they found that they had more opportunities to pursue self-direction values such as freedom and originality, and as a result

of the ability to pursue these values, they became more important to them'. This would accord with research showing how Polish migrants appreciate the 'work-to-live' culture and opportunities for boundaryless careers (Grabowska 2016; Szewczyk 2014) as well as less hierarchical workplaces.

Bartram (2013) discusses whether migrants report more happiness than stayers when asked the question, "Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?" A comparison of European Social Survey data about migrants in western Europe and stayers in CEE uncovered significant variety across origin countries. The clearest finding was specifically about Poles: 'Polish emigrants are significantly less happy than stayers; when we adjust for positive selection (happier people are more likely to migrate), there is support for the conclusion that this difference represents a decrease for Polish emigrants' (167, 169).

## 5. Migration as choice, escape from social control and merging into the receiving society

Of course, many Poles abroad would not like to think of themselves as belonging to 'Polish society' in the sense of being constrained within specifically Polish social structures, or indeed playing out roles or even sharing values held by the majority of the population in Poland. In all places and periods of history, migration is often an escape route and a way of cutting social ties for individuals. For example, women can escape from domestic violence at home and initiate unofficial separations or even divorce (Urbańska 2014, 258). For young people, it is an escape from parental control. Rafał, whom I interviewed in Lublin, described his first job in London, standing in Trafalgar Square with a placard advertising pizzas: 'I felt very good because I was free, I was on the street and no one was breathing down my neck, threatening me or telling me what to do'. Although, as mentioned above, Heath, McGhee and Trevena (2015) report that Polish couples were taking the opportunity of being in the United Kingdom to settle down and have families earlier than would be possible in Poland, Mole et al. (2017, 212) claim that among the CEE population in the United Kingdom there is 'less social pressure to marry – especially on women'. Parents who stay in Poland are frustrated by their inability to influence migrants' behaviour in this respect. For example, when I interviewed Sławomir and Maria in Warsaw in 2016, he mentioned that their daughter, who lived abroad, often asked when they were coming to visit her: 'Maria says, "I'll come, but to play with the children."' "Whose children

will you play with?” “Yours.” “Mine?? In that case you probably won’t be coming.” Maria confirmed, ‘We have those conversations.’ Also in Warsaw in 2016, Anita complained to me about her children living abroad:

What about a wedding, what is it with these young people today? . . . I phone and ask, ‘Daughter dear, when are you getting married?’ ‘Give me a break!’ I phone my son – ‘When’s it going to be?’ ‘Mum, leave me alone! I don’t have time for that [expletive deleted]’ . . . Young people don’t get married nowadays, I don’t know what it is.

Garapich (2016d) writes about the complementary auto-stereotypes of Poles abroad: on the one hand, the self-reliant, dependable individual with a model work ethic; on the other, the untrustworthy, individualistic and envious co-worker. As discussed in [chapter 7](#), some Poles abroad deliberately shun contact with other Poles. In particular, Mole (2015) suggests that LGBTQ Poles positively prefer to avoid fellow Poles, whom they assume might be hostile to sexual minorities. Probably more often, Poles abroad do not avoid, but also do not deliberately seek contact with other Poles. For example, Ewa, a 30-year-old single professional interviewed by Louise Ryan in 2006, commented about her friends:

Oh, a few definitely are Polish, yes, you naturally build up those relationships, but also Canadian, Japanese, British, Irish. Actually it wasn’t really an issue, their nationality, it just happens that they are my friends. I never looked for Polish friends. It is silly to look for the same nationality. If you are moving to another country, you want to learn something, you don’t want to find exactly the same what you just left.

Elsewhere in the interview Ewa commented, ‘People are more free here. I can be more free . . . I always like to go my own way and I feel I can do it easily, no one is shocked’ ([White and Ryan 2008](#), 1494–5).

As mentioned in [chapter 4](#), Poles are struck by differences in workplaces abroad and in Poland. My interviewees commented particularly on the more relaxed, less hierarchical workplace and institutional relationships that they encountered abroad (see also [Cieślík 2011](#); [Karolak 2016](#); [White 2014a](#)). For example, Lucyna, a nursery school teacher in Poland who had worked in Lidl supermarket in Ireland, explained her greater sense of agency in Ireland:

Parents felt they had an equal say in how the pre-school was run . . . whereas in Poland the head teacher runs things more her own way. . . . After I returned I read some Internet postings by Lidl workers and definitely [it's different in Poland. In Ireland] the managers treated us like partners . . . whereas in Poland employees are treated more instrumentally.

To existing members of the receiving society, and the Polish individuals themselves, it often seems like they are simply becoming part of the majority society and embracing a new, and in some respects more relaxed, way of life:

The local culture and lifestyle was attractive for Polish women both in Barcelona and Berlin. They mentioned easy access to culture, recreation areas, sport and a healthy lifestyle. Some women also valued key features of a multicultural society as it made it easier for them to fit in . . . . Several women liked the more relaxed attitude to appearance and material status in comparison with prevalent perceptions among their peers in Poland. (Main 2016a, 76)

Main (2016a, 199) also argues that Polish women feel empowered by having more awareness of healthcare choices thanks to moving abroad. Goodwin, writing about Polish women in New Zealand (2017, 256) reports a similar kind of liberation to that sensed by Main's interviewees in Berlin or Barcelona. Goodwin mentions, for example, that women feel free to go to bars and restaurants on their own and that, after an initial sense of shock, they like the greater freedom New Zealand parents accord children. New Zealand can seem very foreign in this respect. One interviewee commented, for instance, 'A Polish mother would never let her child put dirty shoes on a chair in a restaurant, a New Zealand mother would' (2017, 166). Lack of scrutiny from other Poles is a factor enhancing Polish women's sense of freedom:

The Polish community in New Zealand is very homogenous in terms of class background and education (mainly due to strict immigration procedures and logistic difficulties of moving so far), and very small. All of these factors, combined together, make Polish women's behaviour less scrutinised (including by their families, who are too far away to be a disciplinary force in a case of any transgressions), but also unburdened by any negative ethnic and class stigmatisation. (Goodwin 2017, 269–70)

As shown for example by Pustułka (2013), many Polish people prefer to spend their leisure time in regular British organisations without any ethnic conditions on membership. Leszek, for example, a 29-year-old professional from Kraków interviewed in Bath in 2012, claimed that ‘because I want to improve my English, I’m trying to make more friends, English friends, and somehow operate within British society’. To this end he had joined a rock-climbing society, which helped him form trusting friendships with English people as well as providing hands-on familiarity with the British landscape. Wojciech, interviewed in Grajewo in 2012, was a Real Madrid supporter who had travelled all over Spain to matches and gained a geographically wide-ranging knowledge of the country. Migrants who do not participate in co-ethnic organisations can be hard to find, and often pass unnoticed by researchers (Moroşanu 2013, 2165). In their survey of Poles living in 11 foreign countries – accessed via Polish Internet portals, and therefore more likely to be engaged in Polish activities abroad – Fiń et al. (2013, 56) found that only 19 per cent of post-accession migrants were involved in diaspora organisations, although this rose to 24 per cent of those who had lived abroad over 5 years.

However, even Poles who immerse themselves in the receiving society and do not have much contact with other Poles will sometimes be reminded of their Polish identity by others. Goodwin shows that Polish women in the United Kingdom assume themselves to be under certain social pressure from other Poles to dress and bring up their children according to Polish norms (Goodwin 2017, 270). Garapich (2016c, 225, 231–3), and other researchers have also commented on how Poles try to identify other Poles on the street or in public transport (as seems to be common for other nationalities as well, such as Romanians) and how they feel anxious about being identified as Polish.<sup>8</sup> Fomina (2009, 17) found that some of her interviewees kept away from the Polish church in Bradford partly because they felt ‘under observation’ by fellow parishioners.

Poles living abroad are also to some extent under transnational social pressure, for example, because of the expectation to ‘pull’ friends and family abroad, in line with the conventions mentioned in [chapter 7](#). Urbańska (2015, 287–92) refers to a ‘culture of suspicion’ and cites examples of Polish married women being spied upon by neighbours from their Polish home localities, with gossip relayed back. On the other hand, Krasnodebska (2012, 132) found that women return migrants she interviewed in Opole Silesia were scrupulous about not telling tales in Poland about fellow migrants’ behaviour abroad. To conclude: however much individuals in countries with large Polish populations refuse to believe

that they are part of some Polish community abroad, there are situations where they are ascribed ethnic identities by other Poles and therefore they sense that certain expectations and prejudices accompany these.

## 6. The role of religion and Polish-migrant cultural identities

Moving from Poland abroad, Poles are leaving a country where symbols of religiosity are publicly present – for example, congregations overflowing into the churchyard during mass, crosses in schools, wayside shrines, initials of the Three Kings chalked onto front doors. In some cases they move to a country, like Italy or Spain, where Catholicism is also the majority religion and Catholic Poles have a sense of being integrated into the majority group simply by virtue of Catholic identity (see [Galent, Goddeeris and Niedźwiedzki 2009](#), on Belgium). In many countries, however, Catholicism is not the majority religion, and this poses both integration strategy problems (would it be better to avoid the Catholic Church in the interests of integrating into mainstream society?) and practical problems (where to go to mass?). In such countries, local Catholic churches can be welcoming because they are keen to supplement their congregations, as in Norway, where most adherents of the Catholic Church are migrants, with Poles now the largest category ([Erdal 2017](#)). Overall, the international Catholic Church recognises that it is the responsibility of the receiving country Church to support migrants, if necessary through ethnic parishes.

Nonetheless, Catholicism is viewed as a universal religion, and these parishes are supposed to be bridges into the receiving society, though not for assimilation ([Ryan 2017](#), 296–8). In some countries, such as the United Kingdom, the Catholic Church has welcomed the arrival of additional parishioners but also been concerned about potential separatism of newly arrived ‘Easyjet priests’, who ‘come with their cultural baggage and agenda (spiritual and institutional)’ and sometimes try to create Polish ethnic enclaves in regular parishes ([Trzebiatowska 2010](#), 1057). Krotofil (2013, 108–26) suggests that, as was sometimes also the case in the Cold War period ([Lehr 2015](#), 204–5), priests prefer to discourage integration because they see their main role as keeping Polish identity safe from competition, not believing in the possibility of mixed identities even outside the religious sphere and worrying about moral contamination. She quotes a priest complaining, ‘We’ll be dealing with a great degradation of all the values we bring from Poland’ (2013, 108). Similarly,



Grzymała-Moszczyńska, Hay and Krotofil quote a parishioner who observed, 'Our priests stress that Poles should not integrate but remain in a Polish social context while living and working in the UK.' However, they point out that some Polish parishioners have the opposite expectation: priests should aid adaptation (2011, 227–9).

Mąkosa (2015, 186), using Polish Catholic Mission data, suggests that around 2015 the proportion of Polish migrants attending mass was 10 per cent for England and Wales; Lisak (2015, 106) gives a figure of 8 per cent for 2010. Erdal (2017, 270) reports that in Bergen, Norway, about 20 per cent of registered Polish church members attend Sunday mass. Lisak (2015, 105) calculated that 5–7 per cent of the local Polish Catholic population was attending Polish mass in Dublin, Cork and Galway in 2012, with 12 per cent attendance in the smaller town of Tralee, 'where social life is less anonymous'. Raczyński (2015, 190–1, 207–9) argues that in Iceland different Poles go in opposite directions – they either become more religious, especially at first, when both priests and co-worshippers support their adaptation to the new environment, or less practising. Religion becomes a more private affair; Poles distance themselves from the Catholic Church as an institution and in some cases refer to themselves simply as 'Christians'. They even treat the Catholic and Lutheran churches as equivalents to the extent that they may christen one child in one Church, and the next in the other.

Considering that the clearest change in religious trends in Poland itself is towards a personalisation of religion, the evidence collected about Iceland and the United Kingdom can be used to argue, as I did in [chapter 8](#), that this personalisation may be reinforced to some extent by migration influences. Polish migrants in Krotofil's UK survey were 'increasingly ceasing to believe that regular church attendance is fundamental to their faith' (2013, 203). Krotofil found (2013, 264) that most interviewees did consider faith in God very important to their identity (for some, it became increasingly important), but this did not necessarily have to be mediated by the Church. Lisak (2015, 116) similarly criticises Polish Catholic hierarchy expectations that in Ireland Poles would spontaneously collect together to form parish 'communities'. As Raczyński (2015, 180, 208–9) argues with reference to Poles in Iceland, religion was becoming a private matter. Koralewska further suggests that different types of 'emancipation' abroad follow parallel tracks ([Koralewska 2016](#), 31). Polish women in Iceland, reflecting on the role of institutionalised religion and rejecting it to some extent, combine this with reflection upon and rejection of traditional gender roles. Many types of non-institutionalised religious practices are

invisible to outsiders. Transnational religious activities among Poles in Norway include reading Catholic media from Poland and taking part in Norwegian-Polish simultaneous rosary prayers (Erdal 2017, 276).

Individualisation of personal religiosity is mirrored and reinforced by a parallel trend among migrants abroad towards individualisation in celebrating religious holidays. As noted by Wojtyńska (2011, 118), with regard to Poland as well as other countries, 'patterns of celebrating are rather a matter of individual choice, therefore related to projects of identity construction. They depend for instance on the importance given by an individual to tradition or one's religiosity. Frequently, detached from worship, religious holidays are gradually turning into family celebrations and part of leisure time'. For Poles abroad, like migrants of all nationalities, celebrating holidays as they did in Poland is often an important way to remember their links with their homes in Poland and sometimes to 'perform' their Polish identity in the company of other Poles. For example, Izabela, a return migrant to Wrocław, described to me how her friends who were Jehovah's Witnesses had met up in Dublin to share the Christmas wafer together – in this case, a Polish rather than a religious act, since she was not a Catholic. Wojtyńska (2011, 121) describes remote fishing villages in Iceland where joint celebrations of Christmas and Easter are important for Poles. Individualisation of family holidays is happening in Poland, but the process is more dynamic abroad, since opportunities and motivations for adding in non-Polish traditional elements are even greater, as is the possibility (and pressure from children) to celebrate additional, local holidays. Wojtyńska (2011, 123, 125) notes that Poles eat doughnuts on *Tłusty Czwartek* (Fat Thursday) but then have cream puffs with Icelanders on *Bolludagur*. She further quotes an interviewee who presented her migration to Iceland as a culinary escape: 'In Poland one has to eat carp on Christmas. I hate it. It is not good. Here [in Iceland] I don't even try to have fish. We can make our own menu and eat for example reindeer meat.'

Polish society, despite the imaginings of some priests, is obviously not an object that can be transferred to a new place and remain unchanged by its surroundings. Hence the most important questions seem to be how Polish culture in migration evolves alongside and within (for example) British or Icelandic society, and how this evolution relates to change in Poland. Thomas and Znaniecki (1918–20, 1984) explored the first part of this puzzle when they analysed Polish society in the United States before World War I. They saw the emergence of a hybrid 'Polish-American society' (240) which would gradually de-Polonise. Garapich's monograph on

twenty-first-century London similarly analyses how ‘transnational social fields merge two societies together’ (2016c, 20).

Many researchers, usually implicitly, seem to assume that it is the migrant status of Poles abroad that particularly shapes their lives in this hybrid world. By contrast, non-scholars, not having the benefit of comparable knowledge about non-Polish migrant groups, would probably most often point to the ethnic factor: Polish community life, in particular, is as it is because it is specifically ‘Polish’. For example, a culture of suspicion among Poles abroad, discussed in [chapter 7](#), is regularly presented by stayers and migrants alike as something uniquely and painfully Polish. However, studies of Albanians ([King et al. 2014](#)), Colombians ([Guarnizo, Sanchez and Roach 1999](#)) and Romanians (Vicol 2017) suggest that some other migrant groups are equally suspicious of co-ethnics. If some migrant groups display more solidarity than others, this is connected to aspects of their migrant experience such as likelihood of encountering discrimination ([Portes and Sessenbrenner 1993](#)) or the socio-demographic cohesiveness of the population abroad ([Guarnizo, Sanchez and Roach 1999](#)).

The two identities, ethnic and migrant, need to be distinguished. It is the migrant identity that brings certain types of social change among migrant populations. One aspect of being a migrant, as discussed above, is freedom from social control, insofar as this takes place. Collectively, this results in what Thomas and Znaniecki termed ‘social disorganisation’: Poles in the United States were partly released from the social control of the Polish village, even while maintaining transnational ties to Poland. A second consequence is often downward social mobility and stigmatisation by the majority population, and sometimes also by earlier waves of co-ethnic migrants. A third consequence of being a migrant is the need to engage in a process of establishing status and identity vis-à-vis other co-ethnics abroad, both one’s own generation and other waves. Finally, being a migrant almost always involves renegotiating one’s individual sense of ethnic identity, so it becomes a dual identity, or even a form of hybridity that is more than the sum of its two parts.

To illustrate this last point, as argued throughout this book, migrants’ decisions are often informed by pragmatism rather than patriotism. This applies to eating habits, as to other spheres of life, such as parenting ([Pustułka 2014](#)). Polish migrants can choose to eat Polish or experiment with non-Polish food. Migrants, who tend to be busy people, often eat what is easiest. This consideration (which creates a hybrid Polish-non-Polish menu) overrides the ‘ethnic’ aspect of their eating patterns, as was illustrated in my interview with Judyta and Dariusz in Bristol in 2011:

JUDYTA: Mostly Polish. English sometimes too. I don't go to Polish shops the whole time. And you can get Polish food in the ordinary supermarkets. I buy mostly English food.

ANNE: But there are families where it's considered very important to eat Polish.

DARIUSZ: The important thing is to eat!

On a collective level, this is the merging of two societies that Gara-pich (2016c) describes. It is the hybrid, or 'same but different', quality, not just of individual Poles but also of Polish society abroad, that is most intriguing, particularly the attitudes, practices, informal institutions, and so forth, that characterise society in migration, even if many Poles living abroad are only faintly aware of some of these. Attitudes, practices and institutions develop over time, relating both to trends in Poland and to those in the receiving society. For example, it is not just the case that individual Polish women see different models of gender relations abroad; they also discuss these, face-to-face and on Internet forums (Siara 2009) while also being in touch with friends who may be adopting more partner-like approaches towards the division of household labour in Poland.

Cultural change brought about by migrants from the receiving to the sending country, or vice versa, can be hard to identify and track, particularly considering that Poland and countries such as the United Kingdom are already part of the same cultural space. This is considerably influenced, for example, by popular culture from the United States. As Wojtyńska (2011, 124) points out with reference to Poles in Iceland: 'Many keep various linkages with their previous homes. Thus, they follow changes that are occurring in Poland and innovations. . . . Consequently, it is difficult to judge the source of influences, if they come from Iceland or Poland or maybe popular culture' – which can be common to both. Similarly, Kusek (2015, 113) writes that:

Clubs, bars, and nightlife elitism is a particularly significant example of a lifestyle feature of Polish professional migrants. This indicates continuity in their behaviors between Poland and the UK. As the life of Polish elites in Poland becomes increasingly similar to that of global elites, similarly to shopping or golf, it is difficult to decide whether cool nightclubs and bars are significant for migrants due to their experience in the UK, or if they are also an extension of their life from Warsaw, Krakow, Poznan, or other large Polish cities.

Recent Polish migrants have also produced a copious literary output,<sup>9</sup> so that Polish society in the United Kingdom, for example, has its own Polish migrant literature there; the same is true for other countries, such as Ireland and Germany (Kosmalska 2016; Kosmalska and Jarniewicz 2016; Pleßke and Rostek 2013; Rostek and Uffelman 2011). The subject matter of much of this literature is life in transnational social space. The writers who produce this literature are a mix of return migrants, current migrants and non-Poles, and the literature falls within overlapping national traditions, as well as being located within the wider international genre of migrant fiction.

## 7. Institutions, organisations and networks: Evolving from diaspora to Polish society abroad

If society is envisaged as ‘happening’ across national borders, complete with income, class, gender, age and other social divisions and hierarchies, it becomes readily apparent why so-called diasporas do not display the solidarity they are supposed to. They are simply too plural, too diverse and too stratified. As mentioned in chapter 7, Poles tell sociologists that they are a predominantly divided society, with few unifying attributes. Hence it is unsurprising to find fault lines in Polish society abroad. However, this specifically Polish condition is exacerbated, as argued above, by the migrant situation. At the same time, co-ethnic migrants of any nationality often find themselves trying to collaborate, for emotional and practical reasons, although facing many difficulties along the way – as, for example, Gill (2010) details in his aptly titled article ‘Pathologies of Migrant Place-Making’.

Polish institutions in the United Kingdom, with which this section is mostly concerned, are impressively numerous. This is thanks largely to the hard work and sacrifice of Poles who arrived in the United Kingdom in the 1940s, founding churches, educational and professional organisations, clubs and social centres, scouts, dance troupes, retirement homes, charities and much else (Elgenius 2017; Lehr 2015; Sword 1996).<sup>10</sup> It is also thanks to the efforts of more recent waves of migrants. Polish institutions are the envy of other CEE migrants living in Britain, who see Poles as being better organised. New formal Polish institutions include new businesses and media outlets (Garapich 2008) as well as the more traditional clubs and Saturday Schools.<sup>11</sup> With regard to informal organisations and networks, Pustułka (2013, 113) distinguishes between those whose members meet face-to-face to pursue common interests; those that have

a purely online existence; and groups that organise one-off or cyclical events. Different institutions and organisations address the needs of different sections of Polish society, needs that to some extent overlap but that also come into conflict.

The adaptation of existing diaspora organisations and the creation of new ones are migrant endeavours and usually analysed as such. However, class and generation are also highly relevant, as Garapich (2016c) discusses in his warts-and-all portrait of Poles in London. Garapich (correspondingly with Kusek's findings, see above) suggests that organisations such as Polish Professionals or Polish City Club are deliberately elitist. Garapich (2016c, 303) quotes a member of Polish Professionals who asserted, 'We want to be elite, we want to create elites.' Other institutions, such as Saturday schools, are more inclusive, although the well-established schools faced challenges after 2004 in adjusting to catering mostly for children arriving straight from Poland (Praszałowicz et al. 2012). Voluntary work in Polish institutions also plays a role in re-establishing social status temporarily lost in migration. It can help educated but newly arrived Poles stuck in manual jobs to lead a parallel life as Saturday school teachers, for example, maintaining the middle-class status they enjoyed in Poland. In UK British society, they are at the bottom of the ladder. In UK Polish society, they are middle class.

Polish organisations also divide according to how important they consider integration with the wider British society. For example, trade unionists have to decide whether to make common cause with British workers. Dunin-Wąsowicz and Garapich (2016, 75) quote an activist – a proponent of 'deep cosmopolitanism' – who commented, 'I once had the idea of founding such a union but it turned out to be a mistake because it is divisive, it can't unite us. In every demonstration we take part as members of the GMB, a British union, because Brits have the same problems as we do.'

The *raison d'être* of traditional diaspora organisations was to be islands of Polish culture; for example, in Saturday school it is mandatory to speak Polish. Today there is a divide between Polish activists, worldwide, over their functions – as illustrated, for example, at the 2014 international conference of Saturday school teachers in Kraków. Are they still intended to preserve a cherished 'Polish identity', perceived as an identifiable object to be held or lost? Alternatively, are they expected to engage with the majority society and construct new forms of hybrid Polishness? In the United Kingdom, they are formally regular British institutions – supplementary schools like those teaching many other languages – and in this respect not ethnic 'bubbles'. Some UK Saturday schools (though

my impression from reading websites is that they are in a minority) emphasise the school's role in helping pupils and parents function equally well in Polish and British UK society, in other words developing their British alongside their Polish identities. The John Paul II School in Liverpool, for example, includes among its aims:

To promote Polish culture to broader public by participating in and organising cultural and social events aimed at integrating wider communities in Liverpool; To support existing and newly arrived Polish and bilingual children and their parents by providing them with the advice about British Education System, the Curriculum as well as other aspect of life in Britain.

Different opinions about Saturday school functions can reflect changing priorities of individual parents as they become more settled and their children grow up abroad. Teaching Polish to Polish children can be seen as fulfilling an emotional need to connect with Polish identity and perhaps also a patriotic duty towards the Polish nation, but it also has many practical functions, such as supporting bilingualism as an asset for future life in the United Kingdom; helping older children acquire additional GCSE and A-level qualifications, which will improve their overall life chances in the United Kingdom; or simply enabling children, especially younger children, to spend a morning with Polish friends.

Poles abroad to some extent also participate in social action focused on Polish events and causes, sometimes alongside non-Poles. The death of Pope John Paul II provoked extensive spontaneous demonstrations. Polish migrants occasionally mobilise around their own causes, as shown by mass protests in the United Kingdom against double taxation and for right-hand-drive cars to be registrable in Poland (Garapich 2016a, 106) or to preserve Polish language exams in UK schools. In 2015, the Polish Blood campaign to donate blood to the National Health Service highlighted Poles' contribution to life in the United Kingdom, with the aim of countering anti-migrant propaganda in sections of the UK press and politics.<sup>12</sup> Poles abroad also participate in Poland-based protest movements. Binnie and Klesse (2013, 1108–9), in their article about LGBT activism, use Tarrow's (2005, 29) term 'transnational activists' to denote 'people and groups who are rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in contentious political activities that involve them in transnational networks of contacts and conflicts.' In particular, in October 2016 demonstrations took place in London, as elsewhere outside Poland, to support the Black Monday women's strike and demonstrations against the proposed tightening

of the abortion law. In July 2017, demonstrations throughout Poland defending the independence of the Supreme Court were complemented by rallies in front of Polish embassies across Europe – including non-Polish, pro-EU activists. The Committee for Defence of Democracy, KOD, a movement formed to represent a broad coalition of opposition to the Law and Justice government, has organised events in cities across Europe as well as North America and Australia (Karolewski 2016).<sup>13</sup>

## 8. Conclusions

Many Poles in western Europe who arrived after 2004 are already fairly well-settled. The Polish-born population living abroad increasingly resembles a microcosm of Polish society in Poland, especially in countries like the United Kingdom, where it is not only demographically diverse but also socially stratified. Many migrants do not consider themselves to belong to a diaspora or ‘Polish community’ abroad, with its connotations of smallness, closeness and solidarity, although they are conscious of other Poles living around them, and use Polish media, services, and the like in the foreign country to a greater or lesser extent. (In some cases, they merely consider themselves occasional consumers of Polish services.) Poles with weaker foreign-language knowledge lead more Polish lives, which sometimes build on the tradition of the old diaspora organisations – for example, through Saturday schools – but often have nothing to do with them, and are thoroughly transnational.

Thanks to their (varied) transnational ties, Poles abroad often feel themselves part of Polish society in Poland, but each person has different ties to Poland and feels the connection differently, in different situations. Social change among Poles abroad and social change in Poland are linked, partly through social activism, but mostly through a more elusive process of resocialisation and mutual cultural influence, including the social remittances (*senso stricto*) that travel between the two societies, Polish society abroad and Polish society in Poland. At the same time, these often reinforce global/American popular cultural influences. The societies are also in a sense ‘complementary’. For example, Poles frequently express concern that the birth rate in Poland is low, and, since Poles come abroad partly because it is seen as a ‘normal’ place to start and support a family, one can see the high birth rate in the United Kingdom as a reaction to economic constraints on family size in Poland. According to the logic of ‘Polish society abroad’, it might even make sense to view births in the United Kingdom as contributing to the overall Polish birth rate (rather



than diminishing it, as discussed in Janta 2013, 86). However, this raises a further question mark, since it is rather hard to imagine what can happen to 'Polish society abroad' in the second generation, when ties to Poland may be weaker. This is a salutary reminder that mass EU mobility is a recent phenomenon, so any analysis, lacking the benefit of hindsight, must remain provisional.

## Notes

- 1 Babiński and Praszałowicz (2016, 96–7) suggest that the term 'Polonia' should be reserved for Poles who self-identify as Polonia, which they believe would exclude most post-2004 migrants, as well as Poles stranded in countries such as Belarus and Ukraine as a result of Polish border changes in 1945.
- 2 The survey, in 2009–10, questioned over 3,500 Poles who had arrived within the last 18 months. They found that different countries attracted different types of migrant, from different parts of Poland.
- 3 Population about 50,000, north of Kraków.
- 4 CT0552 2011 Census - Origin Destination Migration - Ethnic Group Polish (write-in), at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/adhocs/006418ct05522011censusorigindestinationmigrationethnicgrouppolishwritein>, last accessed 26 June 2017.
- 5 According to GUS 2016 (460), among Poles temporarily resident for over six months abroad in other European countries in 2015 men outnumbered women everywhere except in Italy. On diversification, see Kowalska and Pelliccia (2012).
- 6 See, e.g. [http://parlament2015.pkw.gov.pl/350\\_Wyniki\\_Sejm\\_zagranica/0/82/](http://parlament2015.pkw.gov.pl/350_Wyniki_Sejm_zagranica/0/82/), last accessed 9 December 2017. Fifty-five thousand UK Poles voted in Polish parliamentary elections in October 2015.
- 7 They were compared with respondents in the European Social Survey 2006–7 born after 1965 (Bardi 2009).
- 8 Discussion at Romanian Migration Workshop, UCL SSEES, 28 April 2017.
- 9 For a virtual archive of 'The Polish Diaspora in the UK and Ireland: Migrations in Literature and Culture since 2004', see <http://emigracja.uni.lodz.pl/en/>. Last accessed 9 December 2017.
- 10 For a timeline showing the main London organisations founded 1939–2015, see Elgenius (2017, 264).
- 11 As of July 2016 there were currently at least 146 schools in the United Kingdom, located in all major towns (Polska-szkola.pl), including many which before 2004 had no Polish communities at all. Some of the following section draws on my observations as a volunteer teacher of English to Polish adults at Saturday schools in Bath, since the academic year 2008–9, when the first school was created.
- 12 For discussion of various campaigns, see Elgenius (2017, 270–1).
- 13 <http://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,22136166,w-niedziele-andrzej-duda-odwiedzi-legionowo-bede-tez-protestujacy.html>. Last accessed 9 December 2017.

# The impact of migration into Poland by non-Poles

ANNE WHITE

## 1. Introduction

This shorter chapter is included for the sake of completeness, although the impact of migration by non-Poles into Poland is less than the impact of migration by Polish citizens in the opposite direction, together with their circular and return migration. Poland is interesting, nonetheless, as a case study of a place that has been considered a future ‘immigration<sup>1</sup> country’, despite its history shaped by refugee exodus and labour emigration. Scholars such as Iglicka (2001) predicted even before EU accession that Poland would become a country with net in-migration. It seems likely that all EU member states eventually do become immigration countries, thanks to rising prosperity, as happened in such typical sending countries as Ireland and Spain. According to the usual pattern (Castles and Miller 2009, 33), this would be temporary labour migration followed by other types such as family reunification, lifestyle and educational mobility. However, a wave of emigration by Irish people and Spaniards after the 2008 global economic crisis suggests the wisdom of not assuming the switch to immigration country status is forever. Moreover, it is possible to be a major sending and receiving country simultaneously, as in the case of the United Kingdom – a dual identity that is also a potential outcome for Poland. Finally, a third migration identity, common in CEE, is as a transit country for migrants hoping to reach popular destinations in western Europe. In the words of a Chinese migrant interviewed by Uehling (2004, 79), ‘Ukraine is the border between China and England.’

The number of migrants legally entering the Polish labour market was fairly steady through most of the post-transition period (Górny et al. 2010, 212). However, the acceleration of Ukrainian migration to Poland in recent years (Kaczmarczyk and Górny 2017) suggests that the process of Poland's transformation into an immigration country is well under way and by 2017 may already have been achieved. By 2015 probably over one million Ukrainians worked in Poland (Chmielewska, Dobroczyk and Puzynkiewicz 2016), roughly the same number as Poles resident in the United Kingdom, a country nearly twice the size. However, Ukrainian migrants, despite their increasing socio-demographic diversity (Grzymała-Każłowska and Brzozowska 2017, 105), have created fewer institutions and are less settled than Poles in the United Kingdom. Most Ukrainians can work in Poland only temporarily.<sup>2</sup> Hence it is premature to think of 'Ukrainian society in Poland'. Potentially, Poland might also acquire new migrant populations through receiving refugees under EU-brokered agreements, but official policy (at time of writing in 2017) was not to do so. To date, Poland's main experience has been with Chechen refugees in the 1990s. In 2015 Poland granted refugee status to only 349 asylum seekers (Klaver et al. 2016, 6). Often, refugees seem to think of Poland as a transit country rather than as a permanent home.

The impact of immigration literature, written with reference mostly to Western countries, is partly about population change simply in terms of numbers of immigrants and their share in the overall population stock. This numerical change can also be considered an aspect of social change in Poland, and accords with the 'adding pieces to the patchwork of Polish society' definition of social change adopted in this book. The addition of non-Poles to the population is particularly important in a country that since World War II has been almost mono-ethnic. The receiving country impact literature further suggests that many popular assumptions, such as that migrants are net recipients of state services, or make it harder for local people to find work, or do not 'want to integrate', are not borne out by evidence. Real potential direct impacts can instead include: a net contribution to government revenues in the receiving country (if migrant labour is predominantly legal) and even some GDP growth;<sup>3</sup> a supply of labour for jobs that are unappealing to natives;<sup>4</sup> a need for integration support services such as language teaching to facilitate migrants' 'active engagement' in society (Ager and Strang 2008, 172), since integration is a two-way process involving efforts by the receiving society as well as migrants; and greater cultural diversity, together with the accumulation of multiple transnational ties linking the receiving country to migrants' countries of origin. The mediated impacts of migration, where politicians

and media interpret immigration as a threat, 'translating it into a political issue' (Mudde 2012, 1–2), are a growth in intolerance and support for right-wing parties, and the spread of myths about migrants bringing disease, stealing jobs and living off the welfare state.

This chapter is not concerned with tourism to Poland. Chapter 8 mentioned the impact of visits by foreigners to individual families in Poland, and tourism collectively does have a large impact on certain cities, reinforcing the impact of temporary residents such as foreign students and employees of international companies. For example, Galent and Kubicki (2010, 217) quote an interviewee observing,

We had the feeling that the whole world was coming to Krakow. What's more, yesterday, when I was at the radio, a guy came in who wrote a tourist guide in the 80s and quoted the fact that during the time of Gierek Krakow had 80,000 foreign tourists per year. Now we have 8 million, which speaks for itself.

Other destinations, such as Wrocław, have also seen a marked increase in tourists since 2004 (Dolińska and Makaro 2013, 44). Dolińska and Makaro (2013, 45) suggest that tourists form 'an important part of the local social landscape . . . [and even if their contact with the city is superficial] the mass influx of tourists . . . increases openness to other cultures'.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 2, on the 'prospect' channel of migration impact, is followed by discussion in Section 3 of the actual numbers and distributions of different migrant groups, policies towards these groups of migrants, and their integration experiences. These are important both in their own right (since migrants are new, additional members of Polish society), but also because of their impact on ethnic Poles. Section 4 briefly discusses migration policies, a topic which divides public opinion. Section 5 addresses how in- and out-migration impacts intersect. I argue that the impacts – direct and mediated – seem largely as to be expected from the experience of other receiving countries in Europe. However, the 'prospect' channel of impact is particularly strong at the moment. So is Poland's particular identity as an emigration country, because of the holes this creates in the labour market (although many immigrants do jobs, such as paid domestic work, that most Poles avoid). The Polish case also shows how important it is to see migrants as a varied category: the impact of Syrians, Ukrainians and Vietnamese people is different.

## 2. The impact of migration as prospect

Kapur (2010, 14) argues that one type of migration influence is a *prospect* channel, an especially significant channel in CEE. Even without immigration, the prospect of receiving immigrants can cause social change in a potential receiving country. In particular, in CEE today it sharpens Euroscepticism – with negativity about EU-related in-migration and out-migration in some cases reinforcing one other. It also influences reactions to those few migrants already present, usually in a negative way, although there can be a backlash against this by anti-racist activists in defence of tolerance and human rights.

This process illustrates well how migration impact is mediated rather than happening directly and spontaneously. The literature on impact in established receiving countries such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom stresses the importance of the media and politicians in shaping public perceptions of immigration, with consequences for incidence of hate crimes, election results, and so forth. As Hall and Mikulska-Jolles (2016) illustrate in their portrait of young anti-immigration Poles, the discourse of hate, which is widespread in social media, has an overwhelming impact, and can cancel out positive impressions gained through individual personal encounters with immigrants (see below).

It is often asserted that nationalism in CEE is more ‘ethnic’ and less ‘civic’ than in the West, and that the region is worse prepared to receive migrants, and generally less tolerant. This is a problematic line of argument, in view of widespread intolerance and ethnic nationalism in western Europe, and because ‘ethnic’ and ‘civic’ varieties of nationalism are empirically hard to separate. In the case of Poland, it is clearly untrue that Poles have always been hostile to receiving refugees, in principle, and opinion polls up to 2015 showed the reverse. When Chechens represented the main refugee flow to Poland, in the 1990s, they did not provoke Islamophobia or fears about security, and, particularly because they were anti-Russian, they were generally welcomed. Right-wing political parties in the presidential and parliamentary election year of 2015 made immigration an election issue for the first time and were quick to associate refugees with a terrorist threat. However, as Hall and Mikulska-Jolles (2016) show, among young people, who imbibe much of their information from the Internet – like young people elsewhere in Europe – voters for all parties are frightened by the prospect of an influx of refugees.

Polish policies towards immigration have developed reactively (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Łodziński 2008, 19). Since for many years

Poland experienced little in-migration, but was expected to receive more, the country became ‘a laboratory for testing various integration solutions’ (Stefańska 2015, 25). Writing before the refugee crisis, Stefańska (2015, 8) comments that ‘a lack of interest in in-migration by the wider public fosters the elaboration of Poland’s integration policy in a more technocratic way’. As of 2016, Poland had no integration policy or strategy, although one had been in the process of being developed under the 2007–15 Civic Platform governments (Klaver et al. 2016, 8).

A final point regarding the ‘prospect’ impact channel is that, as noted in chapter 8, residents of the biggest Polish cities are convinced that their cities are becoming more multicultural and often welcome this trajectory. In their monograph *The Multiculturalism of Monocultural Wrocław*, Dolińska and Makaro, having considered every possible objective marker, conclude (2013, 53) that ‘ethnic diversity in the city is simply small-scale’. Attempts to revive the multicultural identity of cities like Wrocław, Łódź and Kraków are largely historical memory projects. Nonetheless, Dolińska and Makaro show that Wrocław residents interviewed in 2011 both believed their city to be multicultural and located this multicultural quality in the present and future. They associated multiculturalism with students and foreign companies and anticipated the increasing diversity of their city’s population would continue.

### 3. Migration’s contribution to increasing ethnic diversity in Poland

According to the 2011 census, 96 per cent of the population of Poland self-defined as Polish (GUS 2012, 107). Minorities in Poland are mostly not migrants, but long-established national and ethnic<sup>5</sup> minorities such as Jews, Belarusians, Germans and Roma. National and ethnic minorities and minority languages (e.g. Kashubian) enjoy certain rights, but, as elsewhere in the EU, these rights do not extend to migrants (on the parallel case of the Czech Republic, see Sloboba 2016). To some extent minorities are geographically concentrated within Poland, especially Belarusians in the east and Germans in Silesia. The German minority, however, has been shrinking, as Germans have left to live and work abroad. In the 2011 census 126,000 people self-identified as Germans compared with over 150,000 in 2002 (GUS 2012, 107), even though in 2011 it was possible for the first time to record a dual Polish and German identity in the census (and 2 per cent of the population did so). Szczepański (2013, 87) notes that Germans who had lived in poor conditions on state farms and worked

for the Soviet armed forces have largely emigrated, which has had the further effect of diminishing the problem of these pockets of deprivation in Poland. He also suggests (2013, 84) that there has been a kind of hollowing out of German identity among Germans who remain. Although older German people in Poland care about their German identity, middle-aged people care less because they were well-indoctrinated by the communist regime and moreover are 'occupied by their work, often west of the Polish border'. Moreover, since Germany opened its labour market to Poles in 2011, non-German Poles are equally free to work in Germany, so having German ethnicity is no longer an advantage for would-be migrants (Heffner and Solga 2013, 44).

Foreign citizens (excluding temporary labour migrants) officially constitute about 0.5 per cent of Poland's population (Stefańska 2015, 7). Around 2014, even Warsaw, with 20 per cent of Poland's foreign population, had only 2–3 per cent foreigners (Winiarska 2015, 48). However, as suggested above, the number of Ukrainians working in Poland has recently increased dramatically, and they come to work in all sectors of the labour market, in different parts of Poland, although originally they were especially concentrated in Warsaw and in Lublin Region in the east (Janicki 2015; Kaczmarczyk and Górny 2017; Kawczyńska-Butrym, Ogryzko-Wiewiórowska and Butrym 2012). The growth in labour migration in recent years is indicated by the issue of permits and registration of employer applications, which has risen very sharply since 2005 (Brandt 2016, 39). In 2015 county (*powiat*) job centres registered 782,222 employer applications, and in the first 6 months of 2016, 634,321; 97 per cent were for Ukrainians (Feliksiak 2016, 1).

The increased number of foreign residents is important as a trend in its own right. However, how Poles become conscious of and react to this diversification is also a form of social change. Spatial concentration within particular streets is not essential for a minority to create the impression of constituting an ethnic enclave, particularly if migrants are visible in catering and at markets: people in Warsaw are conscious, for example, that there is a Vietnamese population (Piekut 2012). The sudden influx of more foreigners often creates a strong impression. For example, there was a near fivefold increase in the number of foreigners registered as living in Wrocław between 2002 and 2012 (Bielewska 2015, 158), and by spring 2017 the city council estimated that one in ten residents of the city was Ukrainian (Wrotniak-Chałada 2017). Interviewees in Wrocław and Lublin in 2016 made comments such as 'In this shopping mall you can meet lots of Ukrainian ladies who have come to do shopping', 'Most people working in the restaurants in Lublin Plaza [shopping mall] are Ukrainian',

and ‘The majority of Politics and International Relations students at the Marie Curie University [Lublin] are from Ukraine’. In Wrocław, Marek commented: ‘There’s a quiet, gradual influx of new arrivals . . . people working in international companies, or Ukrainians working at shopping centre tills . . . the Ukrainian presence is very obvious, you can tell by the accents you hear at the tills . . . . That’s a silent transformation.’ In Bemowo, a suburb of Warsaw, Celina observed:

At first when there were those [Polish] shops [in England around 2006] but not many. When you went into the shop, when you heard Polish being spoken, oh wow, that was nice, ‘Cześć (hi)’! But now it’s every day. Like it’s an everyday thing for me to hear English spoken in shops here. I don’t notice, because it’s normal . . . . There are lots more foreigners than eight years ago [when I left Poland].

Overall, in 2016, 33 per cent of Poles claimed to know foreigners living in Poland, compared with 30 per cent in 2004 and 25 per cent in 1999 (Feliksiak 2016, 2). Unsurprisingly, most often these foreigners were Ukrainian: 17 per cent of Poles knew Ukrainians living in Poland, compared with 6 per cent in 2010. Other nationalities were barely represented. After Ukrainians, Poles were most likely to know Germans (4 per cent) (Feliksiak 2016, 3).

As in other countries, Poles exaggerate the number of immigrants, at least in the case of groups whom they fear. So, for example, a survey in 2015 revealed that the average Poles supposed Muslims to account for 5 per cent of the Polish population, whereas less than 0.1 per cent of the population is Muslim (Pędzwiatr 2015). However, as mentioned in [chapter 8](#), up to 20 per cent of Poles know Muslims personally (Pędzwiatr 2015), which suggests a migration effect, since unless they live near centres with Chechen refugees most of these contacts must be Muslims met abroad.

## 4. Immigration and integration policies

The chapter is not primarily about policy (discussed, e.g. in Grzymała-Każłowska and Łodziński 2008; Górny et al. 2010; Matyja, Siewierska-Chmaj and Pędzwiatr 2015). However, it is worth noting that countries that do not self-identify as ‘immigration countries’ commonly lack well-defined policies for integrating migrants. Poland is such a country, lacking a



well-defined national integration policy (Lesińska 2015, 16–7). Grzymała-Kazłowska (2015, 468) suggests:

Such a negligence of integration policy seems to result from the failure of recognition of emerging ethno-cultural diversity in the Polish society and the conviction that Poland is a transit country with a very limited scale of settlement immigration and ‘unproblematic’ immigration of migrants of European origin. In such a situation, immigrants have to choose either to assimilate (which is expected in the case of culturally close groups) or to develop their own ethnic system of support (as in the case of the Vietnamese, who, from this point of view, are left without any other choice).

In states that do not self-identify as immigration countries, it is often local authorities who take the lead, as has also happened in Poland. This includes joint action by cities, with the Union of Polish Metropolises issuing a statement in 2017 that ‘united we can work on producing an appropriate culture for accepting migrants, make our cities more open and integrative, and enhance development, innovation and competition’ (Chołodowski 2017). The bigger Polish cities tend to have liberal local governments and, as discussed in previous chapters, usually have their own identity and marketing-based reasons for noticing and promoting their ethnic diversity. This is the background against which they have actually become more diverse. Integration projects are often run by Polish (not migrant-led) NGOs with EU funding, and have tended to be concentrated particularly in Warsaw and Lublin, and more recently Gdańsk – the cities that have shown the greatest commitment to refugee integration (Klaver et al. 2016; Stefańska 2015). Some job centres try to support refugees (e.g. in Białystok), although they are not really equipped to do this (Klaver et al. 2016, 20).

Since most reception centres for asylum seekers (‘foreigners’ centres’) are in remote locations and few asylum seekers study Polish language (Klaver et al. 2016, 10–11), Poles are not very likely to interact with refugees. Refugees, despite being few in number (and often moving on to third countries), experience considerable problems integrating, notably into the housing market, where they face discrimination (Klaver et al. 2016, 18). As for labour migrants, even second-generation Vietnamese people with university degrees living in Poland often work in the Vietnamese ethnic economy in trade or catering (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2015, 473).

Poland’s location on the Schengen border helps determine its immigration control and integration policies. It has attempted to keep

Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians on short-term contracts and in the temporary migrant category, and they are therefore assumed to have limited integration needs, especially in view of linguistic and other kinds of cultural similarity to Poles. However, temporariness often masks circulation – a state of ‘permanent temporariness’ (Lesińska 2015, 14), where foreigners’ working lives are conducted in Poland. Despite cultural advantages, they are often not as well-integrated as might be expected. For example, Ukrainians frequently become stuck in jobs for which they are overqualified because they find it hard to achieve official recognition for their qualifications (Janicki 2015). Language differences do constitute a barrier to integration, since the languages are not mutually intelligible, and Polish takes time to learn (Kawczyńska-Butrym, Ogryzko-Wiewiórowska and Butrym 2012, 43). Many Ukrainians have been working in the shadow economy. Kindler and Szulecka (2013, 658), citing sources from the first decade of the twenty-first century, remark that ‘the unlawful employment of foreigners is claimed to exceed the numbers of registered foreign workers by approximately ten times’. However, this share should be decreasing as it becomes easier for Polish employers to employ foreigners legally. Ukrainians often manifest distrust of fellow Ukrainians, and they have not created many co-ethnic institutions to defend their interests. By contrast, Vietnamese people often belong to associations of co-ethnics and have a much stronger ethos of self-help within ‘Little Vietnam in Warsaw’ (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2015, 481–3).

Integration depends not only on official measures but also on acceptance by the majority population, which, in Poland as elsewhere, tends to take the view that immigrants should make most of the effort in the integration process (Winiarska 2015, 46). Grzymała-Kazłowska and Brzozowska (2017, 118) found that Ukrainian ‘migrants were constructed as culturally and socially similar but not always close and rather inferior’. On the other hand, many settled Ukrainians are married to Poles, speak excellent Polish and are hardly distinguishable from Poles (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2015). For visibly other foreigners, the increase in hate speech and acts of violence against migrants in 2016–17 (Klaver et al. 2016, 32–3) made Poland a more dangerous place. To some extent these simply brought out into the open the fact that black people persistently suffered from abuse in places such as Wrocław,<sup>6</sup> even if ethnic Poles had not been particularly aware of it. A mere 17 per cent of Wrocław residents, for example, could remember witnessing signs of racial hatred such as verbal and physical abuse of black people in 2015–16 (Kłopot et al. 2016).

Anti-racist and pro-refugee organisations have also become more active and attracted more public support in recent years. On the occasion

of the Day of Solidarity with Refugees in 2016, for example, demonstrations were organised by Bread and Salt in 25 locations across Poland (Klaver et al. 2016, 33), and the appeal to participate was signed by hundreds of institutions and organisations.<sup>7</sup> On a more permanent basis, places such as Kazimierz, the former Jewish quarter in Kraków (Lehrer 2013) and the Spanish Bookshop in the centre of Wrocław self-identify as islands of tolerance and constitute gathering places for foreigners as well as LGBT people.<sup>8</sup> The main refugee organisation in Wrocław, Nomada, tries to protect the interests of local Romanian Roma, raise consciousness about the plight of refugees, and educate the public about migration more generally.<sup>9</sup>

## 5. Intertwining of 'emigration' and 'immigration' influences

The most obvious interconnection between out-migration and in-migration is the need to hire foreign labour because of Poles leaving and creating gaps in the Polish labour market; however, as chapter 5 discusses, this is only part of the reason for the rising number of job vacancies explaining the presence of Ukrainian workers in Poland. Other labour market effects include the evolution of international migration into immigration as Polish women working as carers in Germany move back to Poland to open care homes for Germans – so-called 'Grandma export' (Goździak 2016). Changing legislation clarifying the rules for dual citizenship in Poland (Pudżianowska 2017) both reflects and affects out-migration and in-migration trends. Many social remittances also circulate between Poland and foreign countries, which the presence of migrants in Poland itself helps to entrench.

Chromiec, in her book about organisations promoting intercultural dialogue in Poland, points out that, even in the years immediately after EU accession, activists were either people who had spent time abroad or were migrants themselves (2011, 207). In Wrocław in 2016, Marek, an activist and academic, confirmed, 'People working with refugees today were all abroad at some stage.' Even for non-activists in the main Polish cities, the increasing presence of non-Poles as neighbours presents small-scale opportunities for cultural learning similar to those in cities abroad. The obverse of Poles' surprise at smiling strangers in foreign countries (see chapter 7) is immigrants' surprise at unsmiling Poles, but this is not necessarily a sign of hostility – it may happen because Polish neighbours try not to seem curious about the newcomers (Winiarska 2015, 50). Winiarska (2015, 49) describes her migrant interviewees as 'representatives of rather

collectivistic cultures, whose expectations of social relations in the neighbourhood are different to those of the more individualistic Poles'. Some of her Polish interviewees (2015, 51) claimed to modify their behaviour thanks to the example of foreign neighbours:

They [the Vietnamese] were always smiling so wide in the corridor, that these smiles and good humour were contagious. Many times after meeting them I kept smiling to myself. . . . I sometimes notice, I'm speaking sarcastically now, that some neighbours also start to smile. Unnaturally, but they try! And that is an improvement. Poles are very gloomy and we could learn a lot about cheerful mood and politeness from Asians. (Female, 40, Polish)

My own research uncovered several examples of how return migrants were able to empathise with immigrants in Poland, as in the following quotation:

LESZEK: Where I work on building sites you only meet Ukrainians and Poles . . . Lots of skilled workers have gone to Britain and Ireland and there aren't enough in Poland. But the wages went up because there weren't enough working hands. Then when they let Ukrainians come to Poland all the little branches of different companies began importing Ukrainians. Because why give Poles 15 or 20 zł. [pay per hour] if a Ukrainian will take 10 zł.

MALWINA: And they're happy to get it.

LESZEK: And they work twice as fast. Because a Pole wants to work 8 hours a day, and there's a norm that you aren't allowed to work more than 10 hours. But a Ukrainian would work for 14 hours . . . Whole minibuses, coachloads of Ukrainians are coming . . . It's the same principle as Poles going to Germany, or England. Now Ukrainians and Russians are coming to Poland. He'll make as much here in one month as he would in three months at home. It's the same comparison we made.

Return migrants often like using their language skills, have friendly feelings towards Westerners and welcome the cultural diversity they see in Polish cities. Lucyna (Wrocław 2016) for example, suggested: 'With regard to knowing foreign languages, a lot has changed in Poland, and in general in cities a lot of people can understand. Any foreigner could make themselves understood on the street even if the level of the English might not be so high.' Her impression was that the greater number of

foreign students made local people more trustful: 'They are seen as "our" [students].'

Individual migrants in smaller locations can also bring social remittances, as in the following example, where a student in Wrocław was talking about her home town in central Poland (population 60,000):

MAJA: In my town there are two pizzerias belonging to two different Italians. They are completely separate people . . . Their wives are Poles.

ANNE: So did those Polish women go and work in Italy?

MAJA: Apparently so. And now they run restaurants together. Honestly, the pizza tastes really different. Because we have more of all that cheese. In those other restaurants where I live, they're covered in cheese and all sorts of stuff, but in the Italian places they have a really thin pizza base, and it's absolutely delicious. And the price is hardly different. In a small town you can't charge much, and the prices are affordable. So they get lots of custom. Now the other restaurants . . . don't have so much custom.

## 6. Conclusion

Poland has limited experience with integrating refugees and – as in other neighbouring countries in CEE – the national government is currently not prepared politically to receive them. City governments and a large section of civil society are more welcoming. Most Poles believe that Poland needs immigrant labour.

Integration of labour migrants to date has been impeded by assumptions that their migration is temporary. This is typical of new immigration countries. Integration of labour migrants has also been impeded by assumptions about their cultural affinities with Poles and/or capacity for self-help. This is typical of many societies. Poor integration of migrants (as everywhere) is often related to the jobs they do and could be better viewed as social exclusion. However, despite integration problems, immigrants and immigration do have impact on Poland. Poland is currently (2017) experiencing a wave of immigration from Ukraine, creating a rapidly evolving situation, which makes it hard to write about the topic. The following impacts may be observed.

In keeping with trends all over the world, immigration impels city authorities to develop 'integration' policies (or, as they would be considered in the United Kingdom, 'social cohesion' policies). Polish cities, as

well as some smaller towns, have in any case in recent years accentuated their multicultural identity. Though to date this has been largely a memorialisation project, it is now acquiring real flesh as cities do become more ethnically diverse.

Impact does not include Poles in Poland finding their jobs taken by immigrants. One might argue that it is too early to be sure of this, but it seems inherently unlikely given that, because of the dual nature of the labour market, this rarely happens on a significant scale in immigration countries. Neither does it seem to include Poles worrying that their jobs will be taken by immigrants, and in fact they are becoming ever more accepting of the usefulness of immigrant labour for Poland, which is likely to be directly connected to their appreciation of the usefulness of Polish migrants' contributions to foreign economies.

With regard to the prospect channel of migration impact, before 2015 Poles generally displayed a welcoming attitude towards refugees from armed conflict. Since 2015 they have become very hostile to the idea of receiving refugees. This should be seen not as a direct impact of the Syrian refugee crisis but as an artefact of right-wing politicians and movements – in other words, it is a kind of mediated impact, similar to impacts in Western immigration countries. The mediated prospect of refugee migration has impact in the sense that it helps nationalist parties acquire and maintain power and discredit anti-nationalist and liberal opposition voices. It also reinforces a pervading atmosphere of nationalism in Poland, often dressed up as 'patriotism', as in 'patriotic clothing shops'. The mediated prospect of refugee migration has impact in the sense that it helps nationalist parties spread soft Euroscepticism, and it joins up with attempts by some priests to paint migration to western Europe as Brussels luring Poles into exploitation, immorality and gender ideology. However, it seems almost impossible that anti-immigration sentiment could lead (by analogy with the UK case) to Poles. Surveys show that most Poles remain convinced that Poland's future is within the EU.

As return migrants and stayers living in transnational fields become more open to difference, contact with foreigners in Poland itself gives them the opportunity to reflect on similarities with Poles' own situation as migrants and also to practise foreign language skills and other cultural knowledge learned abroad. Hence it plays some part in entrenching greater openness. Since, according to surveys, most Poles do not know foreigners in Poland, but do travel and in many cases work or study abroad, the impact of associating with foreigners in foreign countries must be greater. It seems that, at least for the moment, the main impacts of immigration are to fill gaps in the Polish labour market and to add to the

ethnic diversity of the resident population. However, the unexpected scale of recent Ukrainian migration – apparently still increasing at time of writing in September 2017 – makes the situation hard to assess.

## Notes

- 1 In general, except in set phrases such as ‘immigration country’, I try to avoid using the word ‘immigration’. This has connotations of migration for settlement, whereas many migrants arrive in receiving countries with plans to stay only temporarily.
- 2 Up to 1 January 2018 (when rules changed) Ukrainians, like citizens of other Eastern Partnership countries, were allowed to work in Poland up to six months a year, without applying for work permits. The only precondition was for a future employer to register a declaration of willingness to employ a foreigner, and then have a contract signed.
- 3 On the United Kingdom see, e.g. Dustmann and Frattini (2014).
- 4 On the United Kingdom see, e.g. Migration Advisory Committee (2014).
- 5 Minorities without a nation-state, such as the Tatars and Roma, are officially considered to be ‘ethnic’.
- 6 Information from Nomada activist, Wrocław, 2016.
- 7 <http://solidarnizuchodzcami.pl/apel/>.
- 8 Personal observation and interview with LGBT activist in 2016.
- 9 Nomada website, <http://nomada.info.pl/?lang=en>.

## Developing an ‘inside-out’ approach

### *A transnational sociology of sending countries*

ANNE WHITE

*Now I’m trying to make my [women] friends into rebels – don’t be scared, just go ahead and do it! If I can change anything it will be in my own environment, among people near me. You couldn’t on a big scale like the whole city . . . I try to show my friends that there is a different way of looking at things, a different way to live, and you can be more open and assert your own rights.*

Lucyna, return migrant from Ireland living in Wrocław, 2016

This final chapter reflects briefly on our experience of developing an inside-out approach to understand the impact of migration on sending countries, combining qualitative and quantitative data. We have argued throughout the book that Polish society, and therefore Polish social change, can only be understood with reference to Polish stayers’ links to Poles living abroad. Our puzzle, however, was to understand how those small individual links could connect to wider processes of change occurring throughout society.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2011, 3) pose this puzzle in terms of how social remittances ‘scale up’ to ‘influence regional and national changes’. Their question, with its focus on change starting at the local level, runs counter to the assumptions of policymakers who wish to ‘harness the diaspora’ (see [chapter 3](#)) and organise migrants, particularly business elites, to provide change top-down. Taking a lead from Levitt, our book has investigated the process of grassroots social remitting in detail, especially in [chapter 4](#). We have shown how social remittances could ripple out from migrant to stayer and then from stayer to stayer, particularly if there is a sense of reciprocity,



when recipients of new ideas give something in exchange. Non-migrants should feel that they are making contributions of their own, and that the sending country has something to give to the receiving society, as well as vice versa. Previous scholars have understood that ‘circularity’ is important in social remitting, but often without finding evidence; we were able to find examples in our research of how a consciousness of reciprocity makes social remittances more acceptable in the particular domain where social remitting takes place, be it family, workplace or local community. However, social remittances are not identical to their twins – economic remittances. In most cases it is unrealistic to try to track them very far. Moreover, the social impact of migration includes many indirect influences (e.g. various gender equality impacts documented in our book), which cannot helpfully be labelled social remittances.

Therefore, instead of seeing influence as proceeding ‘up’ or ‘down’, we adopted a third approach and investigated how migration sat side-by-side with other determinants of change. This seemed a more helpful way of viewing the relationship. We applied an inside-out approach and mapped different social and economic trends occurring inside Polish society before looking ‘out’ across international borders to consider how migration might be contributing to those trends. We also considered the various other, non-migration influences that might be at play. Sometimes it seemed possible only to say that migration was one of various factors. However, in writing the book, we became more conscious of how migration influences might be conceptualised relative to other determinants of change.

We identified three relevant aspects of the relationship between migration and social change. The first aspect is the social and geographical location of change: we have been interested in those particular places where migration influences are more important, vis-à-vis other factors, as influences for change. In particular, we showed examples of migration leading to changes in views and behaviour among people without higher education and/or living in small towns and villages. The second aspect is the type of factor causing change. For example, in many cases of social change, migration influences can be categorised as supply-side or demand-side factors. This helps us see how they back up other supply-side or demand-side factors. For instance, returning to the first trend presented in this book, the theme of migrants’ relatives learning English, migration creates an additional demand for English-language courses in Poland. [Table 7.3](#) presents this idea as a diagram; it would have been possible to organise the content of other chapters into similar tables.

The third aspect to consider is whether migration influences push forward or hold back the tempo of change that is already happening for other reasons. Migration clearly helps add to the number of Poles who are confident in foreign languages, so it accelerates that particular trend. In other areas, change in a particular direction can seem surprisingly slow, for example rising levels of generalised trust. It seems that migration is a factor pulling in the reverse direction, diminishing trust in strangers among some sections of Polish society.

Since our aspiration was particularly to identify migration's contribution to the most significant overall changes taking place in Poland as a post-communist society, it was important to begin by having a good overview of change in our sending country. We have argued that Polish society is becoming more open and equal, although we know that both claims, especially the former, will raise some eyebrows. We have justified our claim with detailed evidence from the publicly available and well-respected CBOS and Social Diagnosis (*Diagnoza Społeczna*) surveys. It is important to possess such data, given that more displays of intolerance on the streets and the Internet in Poland in recent years have led to a great deal of liberal pessimism.

However, survey evidence is always superficial and imperfect; tolerance and equality are both multidimensional phenomena; and there also exist counter-trends. We have tried not to see change as simple and unidirectional, and especially not to fall into the trap of viewing change as a catching-up process with Western countries, which themselves exhibit plenty of inequality and intolerance. Other than in [chapter 5](#) (on the labour market) we have also tried not to make normative statements, although it proved impossible to ignore the normativity of others and, especially in [chapter 6](#), we do distance ourselves from certain migration myths. Analysis is not usually helped by claims that things are good or bad. However, having provided our analysis, we hope policymakers can use some of our evidence. It should be of interest on different levels: EU, national, regional and local.

In order to map social change in Poland, the first step in our inside-out approach, we had the advantage of being able to consult extensive publicly available survey data, as well as some quantitative data from our own projects. This was essential, but our attempts to mix migration research with mainstream sociology would have been much easier if there had been more overlap between the two disciplines in the past. One of our main arguments is that, in order to understand the impact of migration on Country X, migration scholars and mainstream sociologists need to

collaborate. Data about the migration experience of survey respondents could helpfully be included in social surveys on every topic, alongside age, sex and so on. Qualitative sociologists could also be more alert to the fact that their research subjects live in transnational social fields and, when they investigate specific areas of social change, keep an eye open for any migration influences.

In our project, we enjoyed the advantage of being able to rely on a large body of Polish migration scholarship, both quantitative and qualitative. This is a blossoming field of migration research. Before we began, we knew a great deal from other researchers' and our own findings about the transnational social space encompassing Poland and other European countries. This made it easier to conceptualise how migration influences occur, and to explore our interviewees' transnational fields. Since social change is a mutual process between Poland and Polish society abroad, understanding the contours of society abroad (particularly in some countries, notably the United Kingdom, Ireland and Norway, and to a lesser extent Belgium and Iceland) was essential.

Because of overlapping content, in practice it was sometimes difficult to decide which information should be placed in [chapter 9](#) ('Polish society abroad') and which in earlier chapters. However, the two-pronged approach was essential, more particularly because it enhanced our ability to bring into play the receiving country scholarship on diversity and cosmopolitanism. Without this literature on the impact of migration on receiving societies, and the emerging literature on social remittances circulating between countries with regard to attitudes to diversity, it would have been harder to apply an inside-out approach and analyse how migration might be contributing to trends towards more openness in Poland (insofar as this process is taking place).

We hope that our research can be replicated and extended in other countries with a great deal of migration, such as Romania or Lithuania, or even countries outside the post-communist region; this depends on the availability of a sufficient body of migration and sociological literature on interrelated themes. There is scope for many small-scale studies of individual places and different types of change, but also for large countrywide studies with multiple fieldwork sites. Ideally, these would be long-term anthropological studies, allowing the researchers to see those connections between migration and change in everyday life that might not be consciously realised by local people, and that they would be unlikely to mention when interviewed by a visiting sociologist.

There are also many additional aspects of change in Poland that we hope can be covered in future research and that we did not have time or

space to cover thoroughly here – even though we found evidence of various migration influences. We particularly regret being unable to explore in greater detail topics such as civil society, education, popular culture, changing fashions in given names and English-language influences on Polish. We would also have liked to have compared more systematically different Polish regions, cities and towns.

Finally, as noted at the beginning and end of [chapter 2](#), our book has been about society in change, not how society *has* or *was* changed. Given that we have no adequate temporal perspective on our subject matter, we do not make any predictions about the shape of change in the future. We hope that mobility-driven change will continue to happen and that the United Kingdom's exit from the EU will not constitute such a watershed that after 2019 it will be possible to look back with hindsight at 2004–19 as a well-defined time of mobility-induced change – change that we will soon be able to assess from a sufficiently removed perspective. Mobility will presumably continue unchecked between Poland and continental Europe. However, even here the nature of social change wrought by migration is likely to evolve. As that generation of Poles who moved and settled in western Europe after 2004 grows older, and as these first-generation migrants increasingly have children and grandchildren born abroad, the transnational social space will inevitably be transformed. Longitudinal research will therefore be essential in order to understand the EU as an evolving 'laboratory of migration'.



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## How has the international mobility of Polish citizens intertwined with other influences to shape society, culture, politics and economics in contemporary Poland?

*The Impact of Migration on Poland* offers a new approach for understanding how migration affects sending countries, and provides a wide-ranging analysis of how Poland has changed, and continues to change, since EU accession in 2004. The authors explore an array of social trends and their causes before using in-depth interview data to illustrate how migration contributes to those causes. They address fundamental questions about whether and how Polish society is becoming more equal and more cosmopolitan, arguing that for particular segments of society migration does make a difference, and can be seen as both leveller and eye-opener. While the book focuses mainly on stayers in Poland, and their multiple contacts with Poles in other countries, Chapter 9 analyses 'Polish society abroad', a more accurate concept than 'community' in countries like the UK, and Chapter 10 considers impacts of immigration to Poland.

The book is written in a lively and accessible style, and will be important reading for anyone interested in the influence of migration on society, as well as students and scholars researching EU mobility, migration theory and methodology, and issues facing contemporary Europe.

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