MIGRATION AND THE TRANSMISSION OF CULTURAL PATTERNS

EDITED BY JANUSZ MUCHA
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This volume presents readers with partial findings from a 2015 project sponsored by the Committee for Migration Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences ‘Migrations in the 21st Century – Choice, Necessity or Coercion.’ We concentrate here on the transmission of cultural patterns due to recent migration processes. Although our focus is on the emigration of Poles after the accession of Poland to the European Union (2004) and the opening up of labour markets in most of the Union’s member-states, we cannot overlook other types of post-migration cultural transmission. Therefore, internal migration of the Kurdish ethnic minority to Istanbul, as well as ‘new’ problems presented by the wars in the Middle East and the resulting large-scale migrations of refugees to the Union cannot escape attention of scholars. Equally interesting would be the analysis of short term and long term immigration to post-accession Poland by both highly skilled (e.g., experts, engineers, managers, artists, researchers) and low-skilled workers (regardless of the sense of this simplified bipolar distinction) and we are planning the publication of these research findings in the not-so-remote future. Foreign college students coming to Poland are a group we already are interested in for this volume (recent literature places mobile college students between the high- and low-skilled collectivities, classifying this group as ‘middling’ migrants; the class dimension of migration processes continues to be important; see, e.g., Luthra and Platt 2016). Polish social sciences do not neglect recent immigration processes and we can witness an increasing number of conferences and books devoted to this issue. New developments demand our constant attention – new research, debates and publications.

Migrations, understood here as intended (regardless of reasons), voluntary or otherwise, spatial mobility of individuals, families or larger collectivities, are as obvious and old as humanity. Even if over decades there has been no significant or rapid increase in this phenomenon (in terms of proportions) on a global scale, the volume of migrating populations is gradually increasing. Everywhere and always, migrations change the structural and cultural situation of the countries of origin and countries of destination, and intensify cultural
differentiation, both in sending and in receiving regions. In host societies, migrations disrupt established and normalized patterns of behaviour. With the return of migrants (and these kinds of processes of mobility also represent an extensive and significant topic of migration literature) or communication between them and their relatives and friends left behind, the cultural patterns (as well as their material manifestations) characterizing the target regions enter, physically or mentally, the sending countries. Out of necessity, we concentrate in this volume on so-called transmigration, understood here as dynamic networks involving both the mobile people (sometimes ‘neo-nomads’) and their immobile ‘significant others,’ whose life practices, information about outside worlds and their general worldviews are dependent (at least partly) on migration processes. The kinds of migration networks and processes shaping them are, actually, rarely finished and cannot be limited to one-directional mobility: from one sending country to one receiving country. In this volume, when we use the terminology of one-directionality, this is only for the sake of simplicity.

There are many types of migrations and, therefore, many typologies debated in social sciences. One such typology was coined by Anthony Richmond in 1994. We can roughly divide migrants (at least those of the last half a century) into ‘reactive’ and ‘proactive.’ The first type would consist mostly of people whose decisions are reactions to circumstances, to a large extent beyond their control, e.g., relocated workers, forced labourers, war victims, refugees, displaced persons. These people usually experience hardship and their destiny is in the hands of more powerful political and economic bodies. Their freedom to move is increasingly limited. The latter type would refer to the spatial mobility related to a relatively unconstrained choice. People engaged in this activity make decisions regarding whether to move at all or not to move, when to move, where to go, how long to stay, whether to travel alone or with relatives or friends, etc. This type of migrants, usually highly skilled people (educated in the sending countries and occupying very qualified positions in host societies), is characterized by a high level of agency and is usually welcome by the target societies. Reactive migrants rarely have the intention to introduce a cultural change in receiving societies, but still they do so, both within the system of their own cultural patterns practiced now in the new environment and in this new environment as such. Proactive migrants usually have the intention to introduce this change, but succeed only partially (at least initially). Both groups find themselves in situations of culture contact which brings profits both to them and to the host society, but simultaneously stimulates tensions and conflicts, of varying levels of intensity and permanence. The overwhelming majority of those migrants with whom we are dealing in this volume belong to the proactive type, even if they are not necessarily ‘elite migrants’ or highly skilled (in the target society) migrants. The intention of their mobility was to improve the standard of living of both themselves and their immediate families, and they wished to live comfortably in the host society: to adjust to some patterns they encountered due to migration and to retain those important for them, brought from the country of origin. In a sense, they transform the host societies – confront them with ways of life not yet experienced before immigration.

The concept of ‘patterns of culture’ was introduced on a large scale to social sciences by scholars belonging to the broadly understood ‘culture and personality’ school in American cultural anthropology. Ralph Linton, in his ‘The Cultural Background of Personality’ (1945),
Migration and the transmission of cultural patterns. Introduction

refers to culture as a configuration of learned behaviour or configuration of patterns of culture. One of Ruth Benedict’s famous books, that of 1934, was entitled ‘The Patterns of Culture.’ In its first chapter, cultural anthropology is defined as a science of customs. Importantly, customs do not appear, according to the author, at random but rather in configurations. And these configurations are patterns of cultures of various tribes and other cultural groups. In our volume, the contributors do not refer directly to the ‘culture and personality approach’ in American cultural anthropology or to the above mentioned books. However, they do often refer to the concepts of acculturation and adaptation (to a lesser degree – assimilation). All these concepts refer to a more or less radical and permanent transmission of cultural patterns due, primarily, to migration.

In 1935, the (American) Social Science Research Council established a Committee consisting of great American anthropologists, Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton and Melville J. Herskovits, who were to prepare a memorandum defining acculturation and presenting the basic empirical and theoretical research agenda. In 1936, in the ‘Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation,’ the Committee came up with the following result: ‘Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups’ (Redford, Linton and Herskovits 1936: 149). This definition became incorporated in the UNESCO dictionary as the official standpoint of the organization and has been referred to ever since.

Despite strong criticism of acculturation, adaptation and assimilation theoretical models which soon followed, these concepts returned, transformed under the influence of new empirical developments, after decades and were picked up by our contributors. They refer mostly to the 1989 and 1997 works of Canadian cultural psychologist John W. Berry (his first important works in this field come from the mid-1970s; he is still actively developing his model; I will refer here to only one of his works) and his associates and followers as well as to the 2005 article of Spanish social scientist Marisol Navas and her collaborators. There is no need to devote much attention to these ideas in the introduction (they are elaborated further in the volume), but nevertheless I would like to focus on some important thoughts. Berry (with his colleagues) developed a model of psychological acculturation processes which inspired research focused on three basic issues: a) acculturation attitudes (ways in and the extent to which migrants intended to maintain their cultural identity when interacting with members of other groups constituting the host society), b) migrants’ changes in their behaviour or ways of life in the receiving country, depending on various characteristics, c) stress originating due to the necessity to confront the migrating situation. In Berry’s opinion, when analyzing acculturation (assimilation, adaptation), one has to separately consider: a) migrants’ intention to maintain their (at least some) original cultural patterns, and b) their intention to adapt to some patterns dominant in the receiving society. If, obviously simplifying, we attribute only two values (yes or no) to each of the two dimensions, we come up with a four-field model of attitudes adopted by migrants: a) integration (yes/yes), b) assimilation (no/yes), c) separation (yes/no) and d) marginalization (no/no). Subsequent studies have shown that most migrants prefer integration and are against marginalization. However, various migrant groups prefer different acculturation options, and these migrant groups are rarely homogenous in their
disposition to acculturation. Follow-up theoretical and empirical research has proved that it is necessary to analyze not only the migrants’ perspective, but that of the host society as well. New models stressed the idea that the receiving country’s population usually has different approaches to migrants’ acculturation, depending on their characteristics, and that both immigrants and host society group strategies can change from generation to generation. Despite strong critical debates, published for instance in 1989 and in 1998 (see also Berry’s reaction to criticism; 2009), the above distinction is still used in intercultural psychology and cultural anthropology.

Debate within cultural psychology continues, including more and more factors into the models of acculturation. Marisol Navas’ (and her colleagues) ‘Relative Acculturation Extended Model’ (RAEM), implemented by some of our contributors, builds upon the former theoretical developments of intercultural psychology: a) joint consideration of the acculturation strategies of both the immigrants and the host society, b) differentiation of the body of immigrant groups, c) significance of societal as well as psychological factors for the acculturation processes. The Spanish scholars add new factors: d) a distinction between, on the one hand, acculturation attitudes preferred by both generalized involved parties (immigrants and host society), or the ‘ideal situation’ and, on the other hand, the strategies actually adopted, or the ‘real situation,’ e) the consideration of various domains of socio-cultural reality in which different strategies can be proposed (social policies and politics, workplace, economy, family, social relations, religion, mentality). Based on former research, the Spanish scholars stress the idea according to which it is profitable to distinguish between the ‘hard core’ (private action, or symbolic) zone and the ‘periphery’ (public action, material) zones in the cultures of the groups in question. Attitudes (behaviour, customs, patterns) tend to be more strongly maintained and defended in the former than in the latter zone, which has consequences for potential societal conflicts and their ways of resolution. Acculturation, both of the migrant groups to the host society and the host society to the cultures of immigrants, will always be partial and selective.

Another interesting concept, useful for the analysis of the transmission of cultural patterns (and applied in our volume by one of the authors) was suggested by Antonina Kłoskowska (2001). She stressed the significance of studying individual ways of the usage of elements of the ‘cultural syntagma’ (understood as a national cultural structure). Within this conceptualization, the dominant factor shaping this usage would be ‘culturalization,’ understood as a process reassembling socialization but emphasizing the development of cultural identity in the course the individual’s life. Peer groups, as well as individual ‘significant others’ who act as gate-keepers of contacts with a given culture, play a fundamental role during this process. They stimulate the individual’s contact with the cultural content (such as beliefs, ideologies, art) and, as a result, these encounters shape one’s cultural identity. It seems that cultural transmission partly depends on practices which may have an individual character, but which are affected by certain collective social actors, e.g., political or cultural elites.

It should be at least mentioned that the very concept of assimilation, after years of criticism, seems to have become increasingly significant in the social sciences, even before the recent (2015–2016) refugee crisis started. As early as 2001, Rogers Brubaker believed the shift from an overwhelming focus on persisting cultural differences to a much broader focus
encompassing emerging commonalities had taken place. In his opinion, although the term ‘assimilation’ had returned to public (including scholarly) debates, the concept had been transformed. After discussing a number of elements of this transformation, he concludes that the concept of assimilation seems to be not only useful but also indispensable. This concept enables us, in his opinion, not only to ask questions about the domain and degrees of emergent similarities in multicultural societies, but also about persisting differences between multigenerational populations of migrants and host societies. We could add, from this volume, that the concept of assimilation gives us a chance to ask new questions concerning the range of possible transmission of cultural patterns.

Among many interesting and large theory-driven research projects on the ‘new’ immigration in Europe, I would like to mention that funded by the Norface Research Programme on Migration, i.e. the SCIP (‘Socio-cultural Integration Processes among New Immigrants in Europe’) project, initiated in 2009. More than 8,000 recently arrived immigrants to four European societies from a number of countries of origin (within the European Union, e.g. Poland, and from outside of it) were surveyed soon after their arrival. Many were reinterviewed after about 1.5 years. Unfortunately, the already published findings concentrate mostly on integration in the labour market and the educational system. Despite the project’s original emphasis on migrants’ cultural identities, we still have not learnt much about the processes of the transmission of cultural patterns in either direction, with the exception of language acquisition (see, e.g., the journal ‘Ethnicity’ and its Special Issue: New Migrants’ Socio-Cultural Integration; 16, 2, 2016; Diehl et al. 2016).

Another interesting, and potentially fruitful for the analysis of transmission of cultural patterns (as well as barriers to this transmission), field of research are studies on the social, symbolic and structural boundaries. Initiated in today’s sense by the famous collection edited by Fredrik Barth on ethnic groups and boundaries (1969), further analyzes developed in the 21st century concentrate on relations between migrants and receiving countries as well as on the dynamic structures of multicultural societies. Boundaries are important in the context of our project, because they hinder transmission of cultural patterns, regardless of the characteristics of the parties building these boundaries. Sometimes they are themselves the long-lasting and relatively strict cultural and structural norms, sometimes they are intentionally constructed only recently, more or less tentatively. The strength and permanence of these boundaries are important for internal group cohesiveness, integration and solidarity, but at the same time hinder relations between the groups. However, in modern dynamic societies the boundaries are very often mutable, porous and permeable. Michele Lamont and Virag Molnar (2002), as well as Christopher A. Bail (2008), Andreas Wimmer (2008) and other scholars are of the opinion that there is a considerable variation in the kinds of boundaries groups construct in order to separate themselves from others. Lemont and Molnar, for instance, distinguish (assuming, however, the relative character of the distinction) between symbolic and social boundaries. The former are conceptual distinctions made by social actors which separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and group belonging. The latter are ‘objectified forms’ of social differences, manifested in unequal access to or unequal distribution of social resources and opportunities. Wimmer stresses the fact that boundaries are quite often the result of political struggle between neighbouring parties and are shifting.
I would like to summarize this discussion on acculturation, assimilation, and the transmission of cultural patterns. Why are the traditional concepts of acculturation or assimilation not sufficient? It seems to me that these concepts are biased, in the sense that they underestimate the complexity of the processes we are interested in. Moderns cultures are rarely homogenous. They consist of patterns which are coordinated differently in different societies in different times. Within the same culture, different classes, generations, gender groups etc. can practice different patterns. These look different in the various fields composing modern cultures. Taken from migration processes, the patterns are transferred across cultural boundaries, some very tight, and some mutable, porous and permeable. The patterns travel across these boundaries, modifying all parties involved. Therefore, transmission is not a one-way process. The transmission of cultural patterns involves: a/ complex societies of origin, b/ migrants who maintain some contacts and feel responsible for those left behind, and c/ various groups in host societies. The migrants bring some patterns to the target countries: they practice these in their own ethnic enclaves but also affect the host society and its patterns. They adopt some patterns from the host societies to practice them in their own enclaves, but also ‘send’ them ‘back home’ – modifying the countries of origin.

Let us move to the content of this volume, to the more ‘empirical’ issues which I would like to stress. Due to migration, patterns of family structures and roles, gender roles in the societies of origin and host societies, ways of application of technologies, the ways of social (including political) organization etc. of migrating groups are transferred in the transnational field within a network of at least three kinds of individual and collective actors, but rarely in a similar way. The parties involved in these processes are not only immigrants and host societies, but also sending countries, in particular those collectivities within them who have direct contacts with migrants. Cultural patterns established and rooted in one kind of structural and cultural circumstances are moved to the others. For instance, the following may be reinterpreted and transferred: ideas of democracy, social security and safety, social dialogue, education on various levels, mass media and the accepted levels of their freedom, ways voluntary associations and other non-governmental organizations function including trade unions, leisure and sport activity, ways of childcare and eldercare, sending and accepting social remittances, etc. We address these issues in our volume.

It seems to be important to approach our topics in a critical way, following recent developments in migration as well as minority theories. This critical attitude concerns, first of all, the former concentration on one-way transfers, the stress on the positive functions of cultural transfers, and their potential to stimulate growth and development (which, in fact, look different depending on the group perspective). It seems that one should pay more attention to the circulation of cultural transfers, to both positive functions and dysfunctions, from the sending society, receiving society, migration groups as cultural entities (but also characterized by weaker or stronger normative differentiation) and migrating individuals with their intentions to organize anew their own life in new social environments, retaining some old cultural patterns and accepting some new ones.

Our contributions address the issue of the transmission of cultural patterns as a result of recent migration processes. However, as mentioned above, in such a small collection it is not possible to cover the whole territory – neither the field of contemporary migrations nor the
themes presented above, important for many social scientists. Therefore, what we do is offer some examples. During the last decade, Polish emigration opened new important directions and target societies, e.g., Scandinavia and Ireland, without, however, neglecting Germany and the United Kingdom. Therefore, we concentrate on these examples. We focus on new, mostly relatively young middle-class migrants who are deeply rooted in Polish culture, but are at the same time open to new experiences, new patterns of culture, new ways of individual and institutional collective practices and also to the potential continuation of mobility. Most of them migrate with their immediate families, but leave some ‘significant others’ (relatives) ‘back home,’ and feel responsible for their wellbeing. As mentioned at the beginning of this Introduction, one must not overlook recent processes of migration, in particular when they have a strong ‘ethnic flavour,’ which occur outside of the regular field of interest of the Polish scholars. Kurds migrating to the multicultural capital city of Turkey, Istanbul, exemplify this case in our volume. Theoretically speaking, issues debated in this chapter are very similar to the issues involving migration processes of Poles.

The volume begins with a contribution from Łukasz Krzyżowski, who discusses the issue of the heterogeneity of recent Polish emigration (to European, traditional for Poles, target countries): their transnational social networks and particularly transfers of social remittances. The next three articles analyze the very new, newer than the United Kingdom and Germany, emigration direction: Scandinavia. Małgorzata Budyta-Budżyńska is interested in the transmission of organizational patterns between Poland and Iceland. Monika Nowicka discusses the transmission of leisure time patterns, holiday celebration patterns, also between Iceland and Poland. Radosław Kossakowski, Magdalena Herzberg and Magdalena Żadkowska are interested in transmission of sport-related attitudes and practices from Norwegian culture to Polish immigrants. Our next contribution, by Karolina Podgórska, deals with immigration to Poland. Her field research report is an analysis of the ways educational migrants to Poland use new information and computer technologies both to adapt to their target country and to make communication with the ‘back home’ easier and more efficient. The last article presents an interesting case, in which the discriminated against Kurdish minority in Turkey both adopts and transforms Turkish cultural patterns in Istanbul.

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HETEROGENEITY OF POLISH MIGRANTS’ TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL REMITTANCES

INTRODUCTION

Migrant social networks most often create a transnational social field (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 1999), fulfilling the role of a transmission belt driven by a dense network of relations within which there are more or less structured interactions and exchange of information. The intensive international migration of Poles after 2004 largely contributed to changes in outlook affecting the people involved in the migration. Transnational studies allowed the intensity of the circulation of practices, ideas, norms and identities to be brought to the fore. This is very often conceptualised as social remittances, concept, that I use in this article. Nevertheless there are other terms coined to describe transactions between ‘movers’ and ‘stayers’ such as: cultural circulation, cultural diffusion or cultural transfer.

Contact with different cultural pattern not only changed the migrants themselves, but also, indirectly, the relatively immobile members of the migrants’ personal social networks. This chapter considers the diffusion of social remittances within the transnational social networks of Polish migrants. For people who have migrated from more homogeneous settings (such as Poland), it might be surprising that social practices (such as child care or eldercare) are different to those in the country of origin. This ‘surprise effect’ may have an influence on migrants’ practices, ideas, norms and identities (Levitt 1998), all of which might be transferred transnationally via social networks. Furthermore, some characteristics – such as heterogeneity – of transnational social networks might have an influence on social networks. Despite numerous studies relating to information flow within networks having being conducted within the social network analysis paradigm, little is still known about how they are modified by transnationality.
The studies were conducted among migrants who had left large cities (i.e. with a population of over 200 thousand) in Poland and are now living in four cities (London, Birmingham, Berlin and Munich).

The article is comprised of five parts. In the first part, I present studies relating to the personal social network and social remittances. I then go on to discuss research methodology. In the next three parts, I present the result of an empirical data analysis. The article is rounded off with a summary.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

A social network is defined as a specific set of linkages among a defined set of persons, with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole may be used to interpret the social behaviour of the persons involved (Mitchell 1969: 2). Social networks can be studied from the perspective of an entire network (whole networks) or personal networks. Whole networks usually limit the scope of any analysis of actors’ relationships with particular institutions (for example, a workplace or sport club). However, personal networks analysis enables all potentially significant relationships that a given person has with significant others within his/her network to be taken into account. Such an approach makes it possible to analyse those migrant networks that are not institutionalised and cross the boundaries of nation states. However, within the social network analysis paradigm, relatively few studies appear relating to migrant networks. In this case, three research programmes (research strings) can be identified.

First of all, there are analyses that concentrate on the incorporative/assimilatory functions of migrant social networks. These indicate in what manner networks enable the reduction of short-term costs of settlement and mobilisation of start-up capital, while facilitating access to the labour market, trainings and acquisition of new skills (Messent et al. 2005; Bailey and Waldinger 1991; Light and Karageorgis 1994). However, this perspective fails to facilitate the analysis of those structural properties of networks that determine information flow and influence the form taken by migrants’ life aspirations. This perspective also relatively rarely takes into account networks’ transnational character.

The second line of research alludes to the concept of transnationality (Glick-Schiller et al. 1992), in which social networks constitute an operational definition of transmigration: A social field can be defined as an unbounded terrain of interlocking egocentric networks. It is more encompassing than that of the network which is best applied to chains of social relationships specific to each person (Glick-Schiller et al. 1999: 344). These studies often take it for granted that migrants have and employ social networks as social capital which facilitates, for example, their departure from their country of origin and the first stages of their new life in a new community (Ryan 2008; Thieme 2006). In this research trend, studies are also conducted that show how migrant social networks influence security (social protection), as well as the financial support of those who have been left in the home country (see e.g. Mazzucato 2006).

The third type of study taking account of social network analysis when analysing migration processes was certainly used in the past (e.g. Boyd 1989), but was only recently
systematised (Herz and Olivier 2011). In contrast to the two aforementioned research trends, social networks are not in this case treated metaphorically, but rather in a manner enabling the systematic accumulation, analysis and visualisation of relational data. A crucial aspect of this approach is the anti-categorical imperative (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994), which places relations, rather than individual characteristics, to the fore. This analytical approach makes it possible to concentrate on existing, more or less structured, contacts taking place in transnational social fields that are relational in character (Vertovec 2009). Studies carried out from this perspective usually relate to social protection (Bilecen and Sienkiewicz 2015) and social support (Herz 2015). In their studies conducted in Germany, Poland, Turkey and Kazakhstan, Basak Bilecen and Joanna Sienkiewicz draw attention to the link between transnationality and social protection across borders. They found that respondents from Turkey are highly engaged in transnational activities when compared to respondents from Poland (medium level of transnationality) and Kazakhstan (low level of transnationality). Migrants from Turkey, to a greater extent than migrants from Poland and Kazakhstan, provide financial security to significant others. By contrast, migrants from Poland are more involved in relationships of care (Bilecen and Sienkiewicz 2015), while Andreas Herz found that 80% of the egos have at least one tie that is transnational. Transnational relationships are most strongly activated when providing emotional support rather than instrumental support. What is more, structural characteristics of personal networks (size, density) and ego attributes (e.g. age and gender of ego, time of residence in country of residence) are more significant than relational characteristics (e.g. contact frequency, tie strength and esp. transnationality) when explaining how migrants receive social support (Herz 2015).

In this article I empirically investigate how the distinctive features of migrant social networks determine the flow of social remittances in a transnational social field. The concept of social remittances was coined by Peggy Levitt to define the transfer of ideas, values, beliefs, norms of behaviour, aspirations, practices and social capital. Levitt divided social remittances into four categories: a) normative structures (ideas, values and beliefs that include norms of behaviour, the notion of family responsibility, principles of neighbourliness, community participation and social mobility aspirations); b) systems of practices (actions shaped by normative structures such as organisational practices: recruiting and socialising new members, goal setting and strategising, establishing leadership roles, and forming interagency ties; this also includes how individuals delegate household tasks and how much they participate in political, religious and civic groups; c) identities; d) social capital (Levitt 1998, 2001, 2013). Pauliina Jarvinen-Alenius, Pirkko Pitkanen and Anna Virkama (2010) underline that social remittances fulfil an important role in three spheres: family life, work and politics. Social remittances can, for example, change the structure of families by introducing birth control or changing gender roles. Furthermore, Clarisa Pérez-Armendáriz and David Crow (2010) demonstrate how social remittances influence the political participation of non-migrants.

However, there are few studies able to show how forms of social remittance are transferred by means of social networks within a specific migration context. I would like to contribute to the social remittances literature by focusing on characteristics of urban migrants’ social networks which determine the content of transfer.
The content and mechanisms behind the transfer of social remittances may be dependent on the structural (such as density and homophily) and relational (such as contact frequency) characteristics of personal communities as well as attributes of egos (such as age, gender, occupations). It may therefore be concluded that the mechanisms behind the transfer of social remittances are embedded within relationships. Little is known about the structural properties of transnational networks and their influence on social remittances. Most studies focus on how the characteristics of networks determine social support. The strongest conclusion drawn by these studies is that strong (Granovetter 1983) and dense networks provide more social support than weak networks (Wellman and Frank 2001). However, if we look at access to information and its diffusion within a network, the opposite would appear to be the case. Mark Granovetter (1983) argues that a person (or ego) with a small number of weak ties will have limited access to information outside the structures directly accessible to the individual.

Barry Wellman and Kenneth Frank (2001) also observed a manner of specialisation within networks within the context of providing social support, since there is a noticeable tendency for the family to provide instrumental and emotional support; friends are responsible for social companionship and work colleagues for everyday support. It may be assumed on the basis of this that migrants do not simply remit (or not, as the case may be) social remittances through different forms of communication. Messages are tailored to the potential receivers based on the meaning of their roles and positions in the migrant’s network. Different sets of information are transferred to different individuals through weak and strong ties. However, studies relating to homophily in social networks (McPherson et al. 2001) show that supportive relations usually take place within homogeneous networks. On the other hand, homophily limits the information people receive. The strongest homophily is based on categories of race and ethnicity (McPherson et al. 2001).

METHOD, DATA AND SAMPLE

The research on which this article is based was conducted as part of the TRANSFORmIG project. Its main objective is to understand cultural encounters between migrants and representatives of the German and British hosting communities, and further, the influence of this contact on imaginaries and values of diversity across the transnational space connecting the places of origin and destination (Nowicka 2015a). The research is of a longitudinal nature (Nowicka, Krzyżowski and Šerbedžija 2015) and was conducted among Polish migrants who have been living in Berlin, Munich, London and Birmingham for longer than 6 months, but less than 10 years. London and Berlin were selected as cities which market themselves internationally as cosmopolitan capitals. Both are also key destinations for Polish migrants. Munich and Birmingham have large immigrant populations (about 22 per cent) but Polish communities in these cities are small – some 9,500 Poles live in Birmingham and 20,000 in Munich. Respondents were recruited from among those migrants who not only live in the four indicated cities, but also arrived in Germany/ the UK from cities where the number of inhabitants is greater than 200,000. The results presented in this article come from the first wave of a longitudinal qualitative study which included interviews with 130 migrants: 35 in Berlin,
Heterogeneity of Polish migrants’ transnational social networks and social remittances

31 in Munich, 33 in London and 31 in Birmingham. The largest proportion of respondents (44%) had been residing in Germany and the UK for between six and ten years. The sample of respondents contains a predominance of women (62%), which is consistent with the current trend for the feminisation of migration flows (Slany, Ślusarczyk and Krzyżowski 2014). Higher education is possessed by 56% of the investigated migrants, while 28% completed their secondary education. Advanced knowledge of the German/English languages is declared by 40% of respondents.

The research tools employed for the qualitative interview prompted narrations on the respondents’ earliest memories of their new country of residence as well as accounts of everyday practices and encounters with people belonging to other groups. The respondents were presented with cards containing prompts relating to their surrounding reality, for example: the life situation of the elderly, education, free time etc. Each card also posed a series of questions enabling sources of information on a given topic to be identified. It was also asked with whom the respondent discussed a particular topic and how recipients of the information in Poland reacted. The analysis of social networks was supplemented by a set of questions not only relating to with whom the respondent had discussed a particular topic, but also a number of detailed questions on the characteristics of people included in the network and the means and content of communication in the network. The interview guide also included a number of survey questions designed to collect information on respondents’ socio-economic status, geographical mobility and a number of practices that can be defined as ‘transnational.’

The data were analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. A statistical analysis of data was conducted on the basis of questions which related to demographic characteristics of the actors in the investigated migrants’ networks as well as the characteristics of the relations between them. This enabled the calculation of the characteristics of the networks determining social remittances. The qualitative data was subjected to a systematic analysis carried out within the cross-case analysis paradigm (Khan and VanWynsberghe 2008), which allows for a theoretical generalisation of results based on the multistage process of comparing individual cases. The use of such an analytical procedure allows us to deepen and clarify the relationships in the qualitative data by discovering which sets of structural factors are reinforced, and which ones are weakened. This all emerges from the analysis of concepts, applications and theoretical generalisations. The qualitative data analysis was performed using the MAXQDA program.

THE CONTENTS OF COMMUNICATION IN TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS

On the basis of the narratives and the analysis of social networks, it was possible to define those spheres of migrants’ lives that are communicated transnationally. Below is a network designed for the purposes of illustration which was based on the experiences of one of the surveyed migrants (see Fig. 1):

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1 A precise description of the sample was presented in TRANSFoRMIG Methodological Note 2 (July 2015). The quantitative analysis contains more cases than the qualitative analysis.
The flow of information occurs via the relations that Anna has with family members in Poland ($N = 3$), and also with friends in Poland ($N = 2$), Germany ($N = 1$) and other countries ($N = 2$). The most important people, designated by a larger circle in the above visualisation, are the respondents’ parents and two female friends who are German. The central position in the structure is occupied by the respondent’s mother. Social remittances are transferred via relations with the five people in Poland.

So what information is circulated in transnational social spaces? Table 1 numerically presents the percentages of relations in which particular themes occur.

Analysis of transferral in different cities generally indicates that (most often in the case of migrants in London and Birmingham), work and education is a frequently recurring theme. These are the spheres with which the surveyed individuals have most contact. What is more, the workplace usually appears as the first place of encounters with diversity, irrespective of the city in which the respondents live. However, the main differentiating factor is ethnicity/race and language within a professional context.
In their conversations with significant others in Poland, the researched individuals from Birmingham and London draw attention to the international environment at work, which translates into their acquiring new intercultural competences:

Here the team is very international, so there is ample opportunity to become better acquainted with the English, how this culture looks in practice, and also how the culture of other European countries, or that of those outside Europe, look. (Adam, London, banker, higher education)

Well, this is how it is. There is a completely different approach to the employee, basically, maybe, as I mentioned earlier, due to this cosmopolitanism, and all that comes with it. Here, it’s quite an adventure for me. I know that 20 nationalities work here with me [...] due to this cosmopolitanism, the employees here are black, Hindu, Sikh, and not only. There are different religions, different faiths, and Muslims. In practice, this means that measures need to be taken to ensure that there is no friction along these lines, or with interpersonal relations, even if someone thinks something about someone else, or something of the kind, none of this comes to the surface. (Igor, London, gravedigger, secondary education)

Most of the surveyed migrants in London and Birmingham, irrespective of their acquired level of education and pursued profession, primarily acquired new competencies in the workplace. The primary differentiating factor among these migrants is their perception of these new skills and their willingness to transfer them in their networks. People in possession of a higher education and working in professions requiring higher qualifications are more likely than people working in low-skilled jobs to frequently stress in their narratives a desire to provoke change, although they are aware of the limited opportunities in this area available to people living in Poland.
The narrative of surveyed migrants in Berlin and Munich regarding the work place varies slightly. They are less anxious to stress the international character of their work. Qualitative data analysis in fact indicates that the most noticeable aspect of their professional lives are language-related problems:

My wife [who works as a nursery teacher – Ł.K.] is most affected by this, because she works, she has contact with people. She has a multi-ethnic environment, where parents come from, for example, Togo or Vietnam, and are unable to speak a word of German, where my wife makes herself understood to the parents by their children acting as intermediaries. (Filip, Munich, secondary education)

Irrespective of the place of residence, attention is drawn to the fact that greater respect is shown to the worker in Germany and the UK than in Poland. Migrants from London and Birmingham draw attention to the fact that nobody is allowed to perform any tasks without receiving prior training. Surveyed migrants in Munich and Berlin also highlight issues connected with the social security they are assured of by working in Germany.

Among the researched migrants in Berlin the most common topic of conversation with their significant others is volunteer work. This is in large measure due to the infrastructure and support offered in this area by the city (Senate Department for Justice and Consumer Protection 2014). The universality of forms of affiliation and actions undertaken on behalf of others is, in the view of migrants researched in Berlin, so prevalent that it also impacts on the pro-social behaviours of migrants:

In fact every German is somewhere taking action. And when they are not taking action, it is even viewed negatively by other Germans that they are not doing anything with themselves, they are not giving anything of themselves to society. So it is actually this that makes an impact. It impacts on all the foreigners who come to Germany. And people start to look into what clubs there are, what associations or, I don’t know, becoming a party member or whether there is talk, for example, of setting up a communal garden, a vegetable garden, for example. Really great initiatives. (Oliwia, Berlin, higher education)

Attention is drawn by researched migrants to the fact that the readiness of Berlin’s inhabitants to support others not only stems from the non-governmental infrastructure that the city provides, but also from a contrast in attitude in this area between Poland and Germany. Even though it is difficult to accurately measure volunteer activity, according to estimates coming from Eurobarometer research, the volunteer rate for Germany is 52% and for Poland 16% (Angermann and Sittermann 2010). The fact that the percentage of social engagement in Poland is three times lower in comparison to Germany translates into a lack of comprehension among family members and friends of the researched migrants’ volunteer activity.

In addition, the researched migrants living in Munich draw attention to finances being a topic of conversation with significant others in Poland. This is closely connected to work-related matters – appearing relatively frequently, therefore, in all four cities – but in Munich it takes on particular significance. On the one hand, all the respondents tend to draw attention to the high accommodation costs and, in cases where the respondents have children, the expensiveness of nurseries and crèches:
Yeah, I know, because I found out about the cost of nurseries. Crèches are even more expensive. So much so that it is best to stay with your child during that period up to the age of four. Getting a three-year-old into nursery is done by, I don’t know, knowing someone or by some miracle [...]. Take my friend, for example. She has twins and preferred to stay with her children at home for an extra year, because it would have cost her around 600 euros for two children. The situation is such that going, or returning to a part-time job, would bring in the same money as that which is saved when staying an extra year at home with the children. (Joanna, Munich, higher education)

However, on the other hand, the same respondents draw attention to the purchasing power they wield and the greater relative affordability of basic items in comparison to Poland. This not only applies to the respondents themselves, but, in particular, to Munich’s inhabitants. In contrast to the narratives of the respondents from the other cities, where the topic of affordability also often surfaces in conversation with significant others, in Munich migrants are more likely to draw attention to prosperity as the basis of German society’s functioning, regulating, among other factors, the family sphere:

Yeah, I told them [her parents – Ł.K.], for example, that senior citizens in Germany have money and that’s clear to see, because in Poland grandfathers can’t usually afford to drive around in a Mercedes, or organise fantastic trips for themselves. Yeah, they can’t even afford to go out for a meal in a restaurant, and if they can afford it, then most of them invest in their children or grandchildren, because they are still building for their future, for they need to help them here and there and so usually forgo their own needs or pleasures for the sake of their children or grandchildren [...]. As for my parents, they are people who have basically devoted their whole lives to their children and could not imagine things any other way. (Ewa, Munich, secondary education)

Differences in the allocation of financial resources are contextualised by the respondents and presented in the form of cultural facts. Respondents take it for granted that Poland varies from Germany with regard to financial management, so potential transferal taking the form of individualism is blocked, as is taking care of one’s own welfare rather than that of younger generations.

Analysis of social remittances in migrant networks reveals two distinguishing features. First, migrants from the researched cities in Germany possess a great deal more knowledge on the functioning of German society and their completely new competencies than in the case of migrants from London and Birmingham. This translates into the second distinguishing feature, namely, the fact that migrants from Munich and Berlin “quantitatively” transfer more social remittances than the researched migrants from London and Birmingham do. However, the remittances vary in terms of content. In various ways, the respondents from different cities acquire knowledge and competencies associated with functioning in new conditions. The long history of Poles migrating to Germany has led to a situation in which migrants from Germany mainly base their suppositions on stereotypes and observations that differ little from the Polish and German reality. However, Polish migrants in the UK have had to master rules that are at a much greater variance culturally to those that prevail in Poland, at least much more so than is the case with Polish migrants in Germany. The
acquisition of new competencies has required them to pursue the kind of work that directs them towards their acquisition. So what determines the differences in remittances between migrants from the four cities?

**HOMOPHILY OF MIGRANTS’ SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL REMITTANCES**

The structural network characteristics on which I wish to concentrate in this part of the article are density and homophily. These, as I wrote in the theoretical part, are crucial factors when it comes to the acquisition and flow of information. However, in migrant network studies these characteristics are very rarely taken into account. In this section, I ask how the structural characteristics of networks, i.e. the degree of homophily and density of networks, change social remittances.

Homophily was calculated as the number of people within the network who are not Poles. Regardless of the division into cities, half of the migrant networks are completely homogeneous with regard to ethnicity/nationality, i.e. all the network members are Poles. 20% of the networks contain one person who is not Polish. Based on the number of the people in networks who are not Poles, a dichotomous variable has been created that divides the researched migrants into two groups: those possessing completely homogeneous networks (50%) and those in which at least one person is a Pole (50%). When the analysis takes into account the respondents’ place of resident, there are noticeable differences in network structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Berlin</th>
<th>Munich</th>
<th>Birmingham</th>
<th>London</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homogenous Networks</td>
<td>25,0%</td>
<td>57,6%</td>
<td>64,5%</td>
<td>55,9%</td>
<td>50,0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterogenous Networks</td>
<td>75,0%</td>
<td>42,4%</td>
<td>35,5%</td>
<td>44,1%</td>
<td>50,0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s research, Wave I, 2014.

Whereas the researched migrants in Berlin possess the most heterogeneous networks, the most homogeneous migrants are in Birmingham. There is, however, one set of factors which modify the homophily of networks among migrants from different cities. Understandably, excellent proficiency in German/English is positively associated with the possession of heterogeneous networks.

Demographic factors (such as gender, education or age) also play a large role in this area. Women generally have more heterogeneous networks than men. However, the situation changes, when we control for the fact of possessing a child. For it turns out that among
women with children, it is homogeneous networks (54%) that predominate. In the case of women without children heterogeneous networks predominate (64%). A simple tendency arises among the researched men, although it is weaker. This situation means that women seek contact with other Polish mothers. This reduces opportunities for acquiring the new social skills associated with functioning in a multicultural environment. 64% of migrants who received a higher education possess heterogeneous networks, in comparison to only 10% in the case of respondents with basic vocational education. It turns out from our research that people with a lower level of education more often take up no-skilled occupations in which, despite everyday contact with other nationalities, meaningful relations are constructed on the basis of ethnic solidarity. This is confirmed by analyses that show the people who are in work – as opposed to the respondents who are unemployed – never have more heterogeneous networks. Professional activity that involves owning and running a company is linked to network heterogeneity (57%).

What differentiates respondents most with regard to network structure are factors connected with family background, in particular the parents’ education and professional activity. For example, 76% of respondents whose fathers received a higher education, as well as 66% of respondents whose mothers graduated from higher education establishments, possess heterogeneous networks. A mother’s professional activity is largely determined by the structure of her network. So, only 20% of the respondents whose mother was not active on the labour market possessed networks that were heterogeneous in structure.

Given the structural characteristics of the network mentioned above, I would like to present the results of the analyses using decision tree functions that show that, in general, transfer of information in heterogeneous networks is more frequent than in the case of homogeneous networks. Of the eighteen defined types of transfer, ten appear more frequently in the heterogeneous networks than in the homogeneous ones. In the heterogeneous networks there is a predominance of transfers associated with norms. They relate, for example, to the rules pertaining to living in a neighbourhood, politeness exchanges and caring for children and the elderly. In homogeneous networks there is a predominance of information flow connected with evident embodied differences between Poland and the UK/Germany. In this case, this leads to the appearance of information on such themes as: eating, dressing, health, new technologies and finances. Sexual mores, and also interior design and the home environment, appear just as frequently in both types of migrant network.

There is a strong correlation between a network’s heterogeneity/homogeneity and the investigated migrants’ place of residence. The most heterogeneous networks are possessed by respondents from Berlin, where 75% of networks contain at least one person who is not Polish. Less heterogeneous networks are found in London (44%), Munich (42%) and Birmingham (35.5%). Comparing this conclusion with the data included in Table 1, it would be fair to claim that, when conversing with their significant others, migrants from Berlin not only raise a great deal of topics connected with functioning in a new environment, but they also possess (much like migrants in Munich) greater knowledge about German society than is the case with the investigated migrants in London and Birmingham with regard to their knowledge of British society. This trend is strongly correlated with network heterogeneity, which prompts the conclusion that possessing networks of ethnically diverse people facilitates the
acquisition of new cultural and social competencies. One argument supporting this conclusion is that the “diverse” people in the network are most often Germans and English, respectively. In summary, migrant network heterogeneity significantly facilitates new knowledge acquisition. The next structural characteristic of networks, density, explains how this knowledge is transferred transnationally.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of social remittances relatively rarely takes into consideration a formal analysis of social networks. References to networks usually only partially serve as a starting point for the analysis of the circulation of the socio-cultural norms, concepts and practices caused by migrations. In these studies, it is assumed that migrant social networks fulfil the functions of a transmission belt, but they are rarely taken into consideration in analyses of the structural characteristics of social networks that to a lesser or greater extent determine the forms taken by social remittances across transnational social spaces. Based on the results of 120 interviews conducted during the first wave of a qualitative longitudinal study, I have introduced two structural characteristics of social networks into this article – homophily and density – while also considering the role they play in the generation and transference of social remittances.

Heterogeneous networks display greater diversity in terms of nationality/ethnicity than homogenous networks with regard to information sources on functioning in a new environment. What is more, in such networks there is also greater diversity with regard to the topics around which the circulation of social remittances are organised. Network heterogeneity increases along with the length of the stay in Germany/the UK. A much smaller role is played in this process by factors of a socio-demographic nature. Of particular significance are those factors associated with the class status not only of the migrants themselves, but of their parents. It is these factors that determine the propensity, or otherwise, of migrants to enter into interactions extending beyond their own ethnic group, thereby expanding their reserves of new social knowledge and competencies, which can then be transferred within social networks.

Heterogeneous migrant networks have a large role to play in transnational transfers. This is due to the fact that network heterogeneity generates a larger reserve of social remittances based on direct contact with network members who are not Poles. In turn, low network density via frequent – in comparison with “strong” networks – contact with significant others in Poland causes information generated in heterogeneous networks to be transferred transnationally more frequently than information generated in homogeneous networks. Density correlates with heterogeneity in migrants’ personal networks and moderates transfers in such a manner that we found transfers in heterogeneous and weak networks related to religion, sexuality, fashion and beauty – social remittances connected with worldview and lifestyle. Meanwhile, in strong and homogenous networks, social remittances are connected with everyday activities.
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ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS
FROM THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, OR NEW PATTERNS
ADOPTED FROM THE RECEIVING COUNTRY?
POLISH ASSOCIATIONS IN ICELAND

When analyzing the transfer of cultural patterns in a migrant situation one usually studies changes in lifestyle, modes of celebration, work culture (Gordon 1964; Berry 1997), rather than formal activities and self-organization among the immigrants. When describing the immigrants’ activity, it is rather from the point of view of their political involvement, either in the receiving country or the country of origin, and their participation in organizational structures of the receiving country, such as labor unions, or social protests (Fennema and Tillie 1999; Tillie 2004; Garapich 2013). Some of the studies on these subjects concern the external determinants of collective activation, i.e. the formal and legal framework for the activity of immigrants (Lesinska 2013), while others focus on the functions of immigrant associations (Joly 2002; Moya 2005). Studies on the modes of immigrants’ self-organization usually do not touch upon the transmission of forms of activity. Meanwhile, one could enquire as to what degree are patterns of organizational culture brought in from the country of origin and adapted to the migrants’ condition, rather than being imposed by the hosts or resulting from the secondary socialization that is emigration.

In the article I present the activities of the Polish diaspora in Iceland, referred to as Polonia. The case of Polonia structures in Iceland is of interest in that they may be studied from the beginning of their existence. The main flux of migration to the island took place following Poland’s accession to the European Union (2004) and the opening of Iceland’s labor market in 2006, and that was also when Polonia associations and initiatives first began to develop. From 2006 onward, Poles have been the largest ethnic group on the island apart from the hosts; in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century, Poles in Iceland numbered about 11 thousand. In the first part of the article I present the theoretical categories which will be applied to the analysis of the subject. The second part is devoted to describing the
associational activity of Poles in Iceland. The third and last part presents Polish initiatives in greater detail. Not all of them are original ideas, some were adapted by the Poles, while others were proposed by the hosts.

Diaspora Associations vs. the Hosts’ Organizational Culture

The level of activity and involvement of immigrants in immigrant associations is influenced by several factors. First are the features of the migrant community, primarily its size. A too small community finds it difficult to organize, while large communities encounter issues in identifying common planes of action, leading to a sometimes excessive and destructive pluralism of immigrant associations. The nature of immigrant activity resembles a bell curve (Schrover and Vermeulen 2005: 823–832), with the medium-sized communities finding it easiest to organize. Also of significance is the duration of stay and the motives for leaving one’s country. Those who emigrate temporarily tend to be reluctant to become involved in immigrant activities, and concentrate mainly on work and, to a lesser extent, on sightseeing; although in Iceland one does encounter people whose stay on the island is in their intention temporary, but who still get involved in one of the projects. Another factor that influences the activity of immigrants is their level of social capital and the organizational culture of the country of origin. A third factor is given by the external opportunity structure, to use a term by Robert Merton (1996) – the formal and legal conditions created in the receiving country for the mobilization and involvement of immigrants. While group activity is dependent on the initiative and talents of individuals, it is also conditioned by the institutional environment and existing relevant cultural patterns. A structural lack of opportunities for action can hamper activity to a larger extent than a shortage of individual initiatives – and conversely, the presence of conditions favorable towards activity and of positive patterns of involvement can compensate for a lack of individual experience in self-organization and community action.

A useful category to describe civic activity and involvement is the category of social capital, as understood by James Coleman and Robert Putnam (Coleman 1990; Putnam 1993). The level of social capital, i.e. the capability for collective action and self-organization, contributes to the reinforcement of group bonds and as a consequence, feeds back into social capital. Like economic capital, social capital, when invested, not only is not consumed, but instead tends to multiply.

In Poland, the level of social capital is low (rank 16 in terms of trust in others according to Eurostat research, while all Nordic nations are close to the top rank in these terms – following Eurostat 2013a; Eurostat 2013b; Schaik 2002: 19), which leads to the question: does this level remain equally low among immigrants? Will people with little training in community action at the local and neighbourhood level become active within communities composed of random individuals extracted from different regions of Poland? One might expect patterns from the country of origin to be reproduced. On the other hand, immigrants observe their hosts and learn new behaviours in the process. Among immigrants a sort of renewed socialization takes place, part of which is an acculturation concerning civic activity. If members of the host
society are active and involved as volunteers, and engaged in a variety of community work in their own benefit and that of others, their attitude may prove to be contagious. Immigrants may well adopt this attitude and the inclination towards community action, especially if the state creates conditions that favor such activities. The climate of activity may seep into the immigrant community, although attitudes and values in general are not easily injected into first generation immigrants.

The situation is different when we consider forms of activity that can be more effectively influenced by the receiving state. Immigrant organizations are usually created bottom-up by the immigrants themselves – however, the bottom-up vs. top-down distinction is sometimes not so simple in the case of immigrant associations, because the receiving state may impose some forms of organization and procedure on immigrant organizations, and in some cases even their modes of activity. An extreme example is given by Sweden, a tolerant and immigrant friendly country. The Swedish model imposes very powerfully an organizational pattern on immigrant associations. In order to be legally recognized and eligible for subsidies, an association must comply with nationwide rules concerning gender balance in governing bodies, financial and activity reporting, and scheduling of member meetings (Odmalm 2004). While in formal terms an association is created by the immigrants themselves, in practice its structure and scope of activity is determined by the state, which imposes a determined organizational culture. Immigrant associations thus become ‘Swedish-modeled’, acquire similarity to each other and to any other Swedish association, losing most of their peculiar features. This model is self-contradictory in that the immigrants are free to practice their peculiar culture – as long as they do it in such a way as was designed by the Swedes. In order for the culture of the country of origin to survive, it must be practiced according to the organizational culture of the receiving country.1

A highly effective way to influence immigrant associations is through funding requirements. In some countries, such as Sweden (as pointed out above), but in Iceland as well, immigrant associations are eligible for funding on the same terms as any local NGOs. Following the policy of equal treatment and tolerance, every civic initiative, be it of the native population or immigrants, may receive funding grants on terms that apply to all organizations equally. This apparently equalitarian approach leads in fact to unequal opportunities, as leaders of immigrant organizations are less familiar with legal rules and regulations than local activists, and often find it difficult to fill out grant applications due to language or other issues resulting from having been raised within a different organizational culture. Such a funding model forces adaptation and adoption of organizational patterns prevalent in the receiving country (though it is hardly surprising that the state sets requirements, considering that it provides funding).

1 Odmalm points out some further negative features of the Swedish approach. It promotes non-ethnic naming of associations, i.e. names of associations may not refer to nationalities or countries, only to the category of immigrant. This follows the more general Swedish approach, that immigrants should not be segregated nor any groups distinguished. Such ‘political correctness’ leads to stripping the immigrants of their old identity, bound to the country of origin, replacing it with a new, void identity which they do not relate to nor self-identify with. Moreover, this approach classifies all aliens as a single category of “immigrants”, with no regard for the huge differences between groups. “Immigrants” as a single category comprises equally Poles, Bosnians, Afghans, Syrians etc.
Immigrant associations usually perform a variety of functions, or less frequently – focus on a single priority. Some immigrant initiatives are focused on cultivating the culture, customs and language of the country of origin, and maintaining the bond with the homeland (*home-oriented associations*). Common celebration of holidays, anniversaries and cultural events has the purpose of inner integration of the immigrant community, but often unintendedly underlines the separation between immigrants and the host society. Daniel Joly called this type of organizations *Odyssean*, being an extension of the home group abroad (Joly 2002). For other organizations, their purpose is to aid the newly arrived in adapting and support their social inclusion in the host society, by providing contacts and information related to functioning in the country of settlement (*host-oriented associations*). Associations of this type were described by Daniel Joly as *Rubican*, their main purpose being to aid in breaking with the former life and easing into a new life abroad (*idem*). Some associations aim to articulate and represent the interests of immigrants with respect to institutions of the receiving country, or even to influence its policies and legal regulations concerning immigrants. Yet others aspire to performing the role of ambassadors of the immigrants’ country of origin. To this end, they organize concerts, exhibitions, and movie shows by artists whose works they want to promote among the society of the country of settlement. Their activity is targeted mainly at the hosts rather than the immigrants, and hence notices and communications about their activities are usually released in the host language, or in English.

Robert Putnam distinguished between two types of social capital: *the bonding type*, which binds the group and strengthens social ties between its members, and *the bridging type* – which enables establishing of relationships with actors external to the group. Bonding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40 (referring to the world’s best-known lubricant – MBB) (Putnam 2000: 23). In the case of immigrant associations and organizations we have both types of social capital: *bonding*, having to do with integration between individuals within the group, and on a higher level – of the whole immigrant community, and *bridging* – related to establishing of contacts with the host society. In the present study, I focus mainly on the bonding type capital.

**NOTE ON THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The study presented in this article was carried out in 2014 in Reykjavik, Akureyri – Iceland’s second largest city, and in Reyðarfjörður, a town in the Eastern Fjords. Two group interviews were conducted with the leaders of the two largest Polish projects in Iceland: the Polish school, and *Projekt: Polska* (*Project: Poland; PP*), in addition to fifteen individual interviews with leaders of smaller Polish initiatives and Polish Roman Catholic clergymen working in Iceland. Furthermore, we carried out twenty two semi-structured in-depth interviews with ‘ordinary’ members of the Polish minority, uninvolved in diaspora activity, and three – with representatives of Icelandic institutions: officials and researchers working with immigrants. The studies were based on three scenarios: one targeted at the ‘activists,’ another at ‘regular’ members of the Polish community, and a third aimed at Icelandic specialists. The purpose of the first was to present the association, its history, structure and forms of activity,
and to obtain a general reflection upon the topic of diaspora activity; in the second, the questions were aimed at obtaining a narration on the subject’s life in Iceland, his/her knowledge of immigrant organizations and participation in diaspora events, and the significance of such to the subject; in the third, the aim was to learn about how the activity of the Polish community compares to that of other ethnic communities, and about the conditions created for immigrants by Iceland’s legal system. Aside from interviews, another source were webpages of the relevant organizations, and archival materials. Participant observation of diaspora events and visitation of a Polish school provided additional data.

**ACTIVITY AND INVOLVEMENT IN POLONIA ACTIVITIES**

In general, Iceland creates conditions favorable towards all kinds of civic initiatives, and the opportunity structure favors activity on part of the immigrants. Establishing and incorporating an association is easy, the respective officials are helpful – this aspect of public activity was pointed out by our Polish interlocutors. Iceland provides a wealth of patterns of civic activity, and its inhabitants encourage immigrants to self-organize, and are open to foreign cultures. As observed by one Pole who has resided in Iceland for over a decade: *This is a good time for action. The Icelandic people are eager to do something for the Poles, seeing they are so many, or to do things with the Poles rather than for them.* Funding of immigrant activities proceeds in the same fashion as in other Nordic states: via generally available grants, and is based on the principle of equal treatment of all NGOs. While this is in general positive, some negative impact is possible: it tends to make organizations formally similar to each other, and to associations in the host society – which is not necessarily a good thing. In formal terms, equal opportunities are provided, however, the odds of success may not be equal in practice, as people raised in a different language and culture can find it hard to compete against the locals.

The general level of involvement of Poles abroad in the activity of diaspora associations in their countries of residence is not high (Raport MSZ 2013; Nowosielski 2014; Dunin Wąsowicz 2013; Garapich 2014; Kaczyński 2013). The Poles who participated in our study asserted that, in spite of conditions favourable towards activity, Poles are not well organized – when compared to other ethnic groups, especially Asian.² There is no single umbrella organization that unites a major part of associations and initiatives of the Polish diaspora on the island. Many Poles take no part at all in diaspora activities, neither in the organization of events nor even do they attend them. Besides a lack of time, and plain passivity, one of the reasons for such a low level of involvement is the transnational nature of modern migrations. This results in living in suspension between the country of origin and that of settlement, and further, in a lack of involvement in the life of the receiving country and of the immigrant community.

² Of interest are the comparisons drawn by Polish Catholic clergymen, who also minister to the Filipino community. According to them, the difference between Poles and Filipinos is striking. The latter meet after church over coffee, tea and cakes to talk and socialize, while Poles head for home right after Mass, as they “have no need for socializing”.

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Nonetheless, in spite of the relatively small number of people comprising the Polish diaspora – when compared to the size of Polish communities in other countries, and the short period of settlement, there still exist on the island about ten Polonia associations and less formal initiatives. There is a group of active persons in Reykjavik, though not very numerous – the same people may be found participating in multiple projects (multiparticipation); as one of the leaders said, this is highly visible at the annual Christmas meetings at the embassy. Polish organizations do not compete against each other, and in spite of the presence of many of the same people in multiple organizations – neither do they collaborate. Each event that takes place is usually the idea of a single organization and only that organization alone makes it happen.

In Iceland there exist typical diaspora organizations, with the aim of assisting the newly arrived, fostering integration of the Polish community and cultivating Polish language and culture – such as a Polish Saturday school, the Association of Poles in Iceland, and the news website Iceland News. Other initiatives are targeted at the host society, aim to promote Polish culture and build bridges between the two nations – an example being Projekt: Polska, established in 2012. There are also some highly popular initiatives which, though not started by Poles, were adapted to the Polish community by its leaders – for instance Polka Bistro or Razem Raźniej. This being an example of transmission of foreign cultural patterns related to civic activity.

Some Poles direct their activity towards Polish sport or cultural initiatives, with no patriotic ambitions, but rather purely recreational and leisure-time oriented. Examples of such initiatives, originally founded by Poles but currently of an international character, are the Pozytywni photographic society, and a hang-gliding club. Iceland’s champion and vice-champion in hang-gliding are Polish, and Polish immigrants spread this sport to the country.

Iceland lacks Polish patriotic or veteran associations, as there is no presence of post-war or Solidarity emigrants, also missing are professional or trade organizations, in the mold of Polish Professionals London in Great Britain, or student societies like the SU Polish Business Society at the LSE (Segaś-Frelak and Grot 2013). Roman Catholic ministry is of less importance than elsewhere; in Great Britain, Germany or Italy it provides economic and spiritual support to immigrants and fosters integration of the Polish community. In Iceland there are five working Polish clergymen (out of a total of 16), and on every Saturday evening and Sunday noon, Mass in the Polish language is celebrated in Reykjavik. Beyond Mass and religious ceremonies, the Catholic church is not a place of gathering and integration for Poles in Iceland (while there does exist a small Polish prayer group at the church, it carries out no external activities within the Polish community). In small-town and rural Poland, churches and schools (due to lack of other suitable places) often perform additional social and cultural functions, and are a focus of the social and cultural life of the local community. The same was observed in immigrant communities, with Catholic churches performing national and social functions and providing space for many diaspora activities in areas of self-help, education, culture and sports. Research carried out after 2004 shows, however, that this role

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3 In addition, there is a Polish Carmelite nunnery in Hafnarfjörður near Reykjavik, established in the 1980s.
has been diminishing in all countries (see, e.g., kosciol.wiara.pl). This is due in part to waning religious practice, but primarily to the appearance of alternative opportunities for activity – less formal modes of association, and Internet-mediated activities. The church is no longer a unique center of diaspora activity, as was the case in the past. Polish emigration to Iceland is relatively recent, and therefore the church never functioned as a center of integration for local Poles. In addition, due to geographically scattered congregations, clergymen are quite busy evangelizing and have little time left for extra-religious activities.

Diaspora associations are usually led by relatively young people, who have already spent several (and sometimes over ten) years in Iceland, who like it there, are fond of Iceland, and emphasize this in their accounts. In fact, it is mainly their attitude towards Iceland that correlates with the Poles’ level of activity, rather than for instance time spent abroad, as is the case with immigrants in other countries (Nowosielski 2014; Kaczyński 2013). Some of the Poles residents in Iceland have by now been naturalized, while others have applied for citizenship. None of our interviewees has resigned their Polish citizenship, they pay visits to Poland – mainly to visit relatives, though with a frequency that decreases with the years, but they maintain interest in Polish affairs.

Polonia activists are people who emigrated from Poland as adults, after graduating from higher education in Poland. Currently a second generation of immigrants is growing up in Iceland, most of them children and teenagers, though there are some adults among them – those seldom become involved in diaspora projects. Among Polonia activists we met only one single person born and raised in Iceland. If recruitment to diaspora associations continues to follow the same pattern, Polonia structures will remain dependent on the influx of new immigrants from Poland for their continued functioning. What if they stop arriving?

Characteristic of the activity of Iceland’s Polonia is the high participation of women. Among Poles in Iceland, the women are far more active, and there exist initiatives where women are the sole participants – exceptions being the hang-gliding association, and the photographic society *Poszytywni*. Leaders of the Association of Women of Foreign Origin W.O.M.E.N. (Samtök kvenna af erlendum uppruna á Íslandi), since 2014 headed by a Pole, have been trying to encourage unemployed Polish men to organize, but with little success.5 It is usual in immigrant associations around the world, with exceptions among self-help and single-issue organizations, that men prevail among the active membership (Schrover and Vermeulen 2005: 827). In part this may be explained as due to most immigrant organizations in continental Europe being Muslim-dominated; however, men are more active than women in Polish organizations in Germany as well (Nowosielski 2014). Iceland clearly stands out in this respect. The reason for this is a shift in the profile of Polish emigration, post-EU accession. Post-accession Polish emigrants to states newly opened to migration are men and women

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4 The association is involved in solving problems encountered by female immigrants from Afghanistan and other Asian and African nations.

5 All Poles in Iceland are members of labor unions, mainly those that organize unqualified workers. Union membership is by branch of activity and is obligatory. Few Poles become union activists, we have been able to interview only one such person. Unions do not carry out activities specifically targeted at immigrants, however union activists strive to ensure that immigrants are represented in union leadership bodies.
in approximately similar numbers, sometimes even women dominate; this is not the case for countries that are traditional destinations for emigration, such as Germany – where men continue to dominate (Anacka and Okólski 2014). Yet another reason for the high activity of women in Iceland is the traditional Scandinavian pattern of female social activism, which is clearly being adopted by Polish women – providing another example of transmission of cultural patterns related to civic activity.

POLISH ASSOCIATIONS IN ICELAND

The largest and most institutionalized among Polish initiatives is the Polish Saturday school. Established in 2008, it was created with aid from the Embassy by Polish-educated teachers, most of them with a brief tenure at teaching in Poland. In Iceland they are mostly employed in other professions, often at manual labor, and work at the school allows them a measure of respite from professional degradation – immigrant organizations frequently play a compensating role. In spite of inadequate premises, the school functions rather well, and in the school year 2014/2015 was attended by over 200 children (at pre-school, elementary and middle-school level). The establishment lacks the status of ‘consulting unit’ granted by the Polish ministry of education, and therefore is not subject to regulation by this ministry. The school’s principal maintains that this actually makes it easier for the school to function – having greater freedom of decision and less bureaucracy, while additionally allowing them, as an association, to apply for Icelandic grants. The school is funded mainly by the Embassy and from fees paid by parents.

The school functions just like a typical Polish school: children use Polish textbooks, not ones specially created for Polonia (as is the case for instance in Great Britain), teaching spans the humanities and social sciences: Polish language, history, civic education, geography, religion (the remaining subjects are covered on weekdays in Icelandic school); regular parent-teacher and pedagogical council meetings are held, there is a school pedagogue and a psychologist, and even a speech therapist. The school makes the impression of being more relaxed than typical of Polish schools, which may be a result of the influence of the less stressful system of instruction that prevails in Iceland, but might as well be due to the fact that these are elective courses that pupils take on weekends. Teachers at the Polish school do not participate in Iceland’s system of teacher training, though they would like to be able to benefit from such support, to enable them to adopt some of Iceland’s educational patterns, for example in what concerns psychological aid for pupils (as for the level of instruction, Poles in general hold the opinion that it is much lower in Iceland than in Poland). What clearly sets this school apart from schools in Poland are the extra-curricular activities it provides for the Polish community in Reykjavik – events offered to the entire community: meetings with people of interest, or participation in the inter-cultural parade that is held every May in Reykjavik. Moreover, the school serves as an intermediary in communication between Icelandic institutions and the Polish community: for instance, election campaign meetings are announced on the school’s pages. The school acts as a classical social micro-structure, in between the individual and the macro-structure – the state (Szmatka 2008: 237–262).
The oldest Polish initiative in Iceland is the Society of Icelandic-Polish Friendship (VIP – Vinattufélag Islendinga og Polverja), established in the late 1990s. It is not strictly a Polonia organization, as the membership consists of persons who want to promote Polish-Icelandic contacts, including Icelanders; and therefore, the language at meetings is Icelandic. Currently the Society is in hiatus, the most recent event it sponsored was a Festival of Polish Culture in Reykjavik, which lasted several days in 2006. Persons active at the Society created in 2001 another organization: the Society of Poles in Iceland (SPI). This is a purely Polonia organization, with membership consisting exclusively of Poles. The purpose of SPI is to provide assistance to Poles who encounter difficulties in adapting in Iceland, related to language or other issues. The other purpose is integration of the Polish community, by organizing excursions to tourist attractions in Iceland, or celebrating dates important to Polonia. Every year on All Saints’ Day (November 1) the leaders of SPI together with children from the Polish school hold a vigil at Polish graves at Fossvogur Cemetery near Reykjavik. This is meant to commemorate the tragedy of the Polish ship “Wigry,” which sunk at the coast of Iceland in January of 1942, but at the same time, to make a symbolic connection with people in Poland who celebrate on that day. The functioning of the Society is based on volunteer contributions, both labor and financial support of events by individuals.

The association Projekt: Polska has a different purpose and set of rules. While a foreign subsidiary of Projekt: Polska which operates in Poland, at the same time it is incorporated as an association in Iceland. By virtue of being a subsidiary, it is able to benefit from organizational support from Poland and to apply for funding by grants from Poland, while being incorporated in Iceland gives it the benefits enjoyed by Icelandic NGOs. We are able to revolve within both legal realities. Depending on who we speak to, we can show either of two faces, says one of the project’s leaders explaining this dual formula. Such a dual identity also comes in handy when applying for a grant, either Polish or Icelandic, that requires partnership with a foreign institution. In such a case the Icelandic Projekt: Polska has for a natural partner its mother association in Poland, and vice-versa.

Projekt: Polska in Iceland was initiated in the fall of 2012, proposed, founded and initially led by a Projekt: Polska activist from Poland – which supports the conjecture that persons who were civically active in their country of origin tend to continue such interests in the country of settlement (Nowosielski 2014: 164). Among members of Projekt are both permanent residents in Iceland as well as persons who are there temporarily.

Projekt: Polska got started with the slogan ‘Iceland is the world’s most hipster nation.’ Its activists pursue three aims. First, to promote Polish culture in Iceland by means that are modern, accessible and readily grasped by both locals and foreigners – thus the Projekt’s news bulletin is released in English. This aim is furthered by such activities as distributing in Reykjavik free of charge a newspaper in Icelandic about Poland and Poles in Iceland, or floating lanterns on the lake in central Reykjavik on the Day of Human Rights. While the latter activity had little relation to Polish traditions, ‘lanterns of freedom’ are floated in Poland by members of Projekt: Polska there and the same idea was taken to Reykjavik. The idea caught on and won Projekt an award.

The second aim of Projekt: Polska is integration of the Polish community in Iceland, hence activities such as Christmas and Easter holiday celebrations, support for WOŚP (Grand
Orchestra of the Holiday Aid, a charity drive popular in Poland), visiting the National Museum in Reykjavik with a Polish guide on the Night of Museums, or celebration of Polish national holidays with activities targeted at the locals – on November 11, 2013, the association held a public reading of a Polish children’s rhyme by Icelanders, while in 2014 a blood donation drive was organized in the Reykjavik Opera House (Harpa), together with a kermesse of Polish pastries. Donating blood is not common in Iceland, PP aimed to promote the idea while at the same time getting across the message that Poland was celebrating its national holiday. The association’s third aim is to act against discrimination of foreigners.

The leaders of PP take a course of action different from that of older Polish initiatives, and from the outset planned for dual legal status and grant-based funding. This mode of activity was transported by the association from Poland, and in Iceland funding of civic initiatives proceeds in a similar way, therefore PP leaders take advantage of the opportunity structure created by the state for Icelandic NGOs.

However, their different mode of activity when compared to other Polish associations does cause some tension in the Polish community. Opinions about Projekt: Polska tend to be extreme, ranging between high praise: they stand out the most and are seen as positive; and strong criticism: Projekt: Polska is just self-promotion of those involved.

A media-related initiative, a Polish language news portal called Iceland News Polska was established in 2010. Before the crisis, some news items from Icelandic outlets translated into Polish were distributed via the internet. According to Poles, they were rather tendentious, related mainly to crime and criminal activity involving Polish people, and thus weren’t read much. There was a need for a Polish-language news portal, with translations of news from Icelandic outlets and news items on Polish life in the country. The initiative received initial funding via an Icelandic grant from a program for promoting women’s business initiatives. The intention was to create a commercial entity, however it turned out there was no advertising market in Iceland for a Polish-language medium – hence currently the portal functions on volunteer labor and the founder’s and chief editor’s sense of mission.6

Another initiative widely known among Poles is Razem Raźniej (Better Spirit Together); Gaman Saman is the original Icelandic name for this initiative, which is a Scandinavian project proposed for Polish and Spanish immigrants in Iceland. Its aim is to cultivate the native language among children of immigrants, by meetings of children from the given national group under the care of immigrant teachers. The children engage in play, learning songs and rhymes in their native language, while their parents meet other parents from the same national group. The activities are targeted at pre-school age children, therefore the children’s and parents’ meetings take place once a month in an Icelandic pre-school. The project was initiated in 2010, the Spanish-language group lasted only for one year; in 2014, only the Polish project was active, with about one hundred participants. RR is an informal initiative sponsored by the Icelandic ministry, however its initiators plan to formalize it as a Polonia association, to enable grant applications.

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6 Besides the portal, there exists a Polish-language forum, but carrying no news – only advice and announcements.
Another idea aimed at pre-school children, popular in smaller settlements, is joint reading of Polish fairy tales. This is usually carried out by a Polish teacher or librarian, who invites the children to a local library to play together and listen to readings. Both kinds of projects targeted at children are quite popular and have caught on. There are several reasons for their success: firstly, these initiatives from the outset enjoyed strong support from Icelandic institutions; secondly, they were in tune with the needs of the Polish community – many Polish children are born in Iceland, and their parents wanted them to have the opportunity to meet their Polish peers. Thirdly, such meetings are readily possible, because among the Polish diaspora in Iceland there is a fairly large number of pre-school instructors. Razem Raźniej and fairy tale readings are examples of foreign pro-integration ideas that were successfully adopted by the Polish community.

Yet another foreign initiative that caught on with the Poles is Polka Bistro. This is a Polish version of a Finnish idea known around the world as Restaurant Day. These are one-day restaurants, which may be opened by anyone and anywhere: in a home, courtyard or in the street; the point being that one needs not apply for the required permits when this is part of a larger project. Such events are held on the same day worldwide, four times a year.

Restaurant Day happens also in Poland, however the idea was not brought from Poland, instead the Polish women who engage in this event heard about it in Iceland and started holding it in 2013. Usually one-day restaurants offer a single type of food, that may be consumed on the spot or as take-away. Poles in Iceland proposed Polish dishes and put the name Polka Bistro to their initiative, to underline the Polish character, as well the simplicity of the dishes and short preparation time. The organizers of Polka Bistro aimed at three ideas: to meet with compatriots over a shared meal, to recreate the flavor of home cooking, and in the process – to introduce Icelanders to Polish food.

CONCLUSIONS

While studying the transmission of cultural patterns, one usually describes changes in leisure time activities, work culture, consumption and lifestyle. However, transfer of cultural patterns may as well apply to forms of civic activity and modes of self-organization. With respect to the capability for adapting foreign cultural and organizational patterns, one may distinguish three types of Polonia associations in Iceland. First, Odysseyan societies, aimed at cultivating the traditions and culture of the country of origin and integrating the immigrant community through joint celebrations and by providing aid in coping with new conditions of life. These operate based on the work of volunteers and funds provided by the embassy, along the lines of a traditional model of diaspora organization, such as those that function in other countries where a Polish diaspora is present. The second type are associations that function according to the mode of operation of modern European NGOs. In Iceland equally as in Poland, this is a task-based model where activity is funded by grants obtained by the association from local government bodies or government ministries. This model corresponds to Rubican associations, oriented towards activities targeting their compatriots, and at the
same time members of the host community, from which they adopt certain forms of activity, while grant-based funding imposes certain organizational rules. The third type of initiatives are activities proposed by Icelanders, or adopted from them by Poles, such as Gaman Saman and Restaurant Day – in this case we are clearly dealing with the transfer of cultural and institutional patterns.

In general, the leaders of Polonia associations are open to proposals from the Icelandic side, keep in touch with local authorities and take advantage of the opportunity structure created by the state; in certain situations they even express the desire for stronger institutional connections with for instance Iceland’s school system. Such an ease in adopting foreign forms of activity follows from a number of reasons. First is the appearance of a new breed of diaspora activist. These are persons from the new wave of post-accession (to the EU) emigrants, relatively young and well educated, often with prior experience as emigrants, who strive to reach out beyond the immigrant community. Second, is the currently similar mode of operation and funding of non-governmental organizations in Poland and in Iceland. Some among the Polish community leaders in Iceland were previously active in NGOs in Poland and brought their experience with them to Iceland. This can hardly be regarded as a transfer of organizational patterns, but rather as simply taking advantage of opportunities created by the Icelandic state. And finally, being the Polish diaspora in Iceland a young community, its structures are still in a stage of formation, and in absence of old entrenched associations it becomes possible to plan activities along totally new patterns. Some ideas were taken over from the host population, one may therefore speak of a transmission of modes of operation and, above all, of attitudes of involvement with the community; in some part such activities are typical of the entire new wave of European emigration, also those who originate from “old” EU states – for example Italians in the UK (Garapich 2014), and have to do more with the appearance of a new kind of immigrant – cosmopolitan, communicating through social media, organizing immigrant life via the Internet, rather than with a transfer of cultural and organizational patterns borrowed from the receiving nation. In this sense the transfer of organizational patterns from the receiving country proceeds in parallel with the inter-generational transfer of organizational patterns within the ethnic community.

As for the transfer of patterns from the Polish minority to the Icelandic majority, some Polish initiatives have gained notice among the host society (paragliding, the Pozytywni club), however in no case one can claim that there has been a transfer of cultural or organizational patterns, not even a selective one. The Polish community, numbering about eleven thousand, is at a too low level of cultural capital and social standing to have an impact on Iceland’s organizational culture or forms of activity.

Neither does one observe any transfer of cultural patterns between Poles and other ethnic groups. Outside of work, different ethnicities come into contact at the yearly intercultural parade in Reykjavik and at children’s festivals, but at such occasions each group makes a separate appearance, following concepts of their own. For predominantly Catholic ethnic groups one might expect church services to provide a natural place for contacts and acculturation – but no transfer of patterns of celebration actually takes place; the three largest and best organized Catholic communities in Reykjavik, Poles, Lithuanians and Filipinos, each celebrate their own separate services, and live side by side without much mingling.
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REJECTED OR TRANSMITTED PATTERNS?
LEISURE TIME AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATION:
CASE OF POLISH IMMIGRANTS IN ICELAND

INTRODUCTION

Culture plays a vital role in the formation of a community; therefore cultural differences are the most important issues affecting contact with strangers (Castles and Miller 2011). One way to analyze the socio-cultural dimension of the integration of immigrants is to look at the way they spend their spare time and celebrate holidays. Consideration of the latter is also important because of the overall role of holidays in social life – they help activate cultural life, cultivate traditions, pass important values from generation to generation, and intensify individual’s initiation and cultural socialization (Żygulski 1981). Furthermore, holiday celebration allows observing behaviour of immigrants in a unique situation away from regular schemes. Unlike behaving in everyday situations, which can be learned in the course of daily interactions, celebration of holiday requires willingness and increased cognitive activity on the side of immigrants in order to learn how nationals of host country behave. According to John W. Berry’s model (1997), immigrants can either retain their cultural patterns from country of origin or adapt to the cultural patterns of the host country. Finally, immigrants can also follow a combined model, where they incorporate behaviours from both societies which results in a new quality (Wojtyńska 2011a). Here, it is proposed that Polish immigrants in Iceland at their present, early stage of adaptation to the Icelandic society reject those of the host country cultural patterns that most strongly threaten their national identity. As a result, adapting to Icelandic culture will either be pragmatic in character (Shibutani and Kwan 1965) or will occur in situations when patterns brought from the original society are perceived as less attractive than Icelandic. Adapting Icelandic cultural patterns is typical indication of acceptance of the integration strategy, whereas retaining old cultural patterns is typical for the isolation strategies.
METHODOLOGY

Following article is based on the analysis of 71 semi-structured in-depth individual interviews. 54 of which were conducted in Reykjavik in 2010, whereas remaining 17 interviews were conducted in 2014. All of the interviewees were recruited by a snow-ball sampling. Women constituted 44 of the respondents (32 in 2010 and 12 in 2014), remaining 27 were men (22 in 2010 and 5 in 2014). Majority of the interviewees arrived to Iceland after opening of the labour market in 2006, however there were also 11 respondents with more than 7 year residency in Iceland (the minimal residency period one needs to have in order to apply for Icelandic citizenship). Majority of the respondents work in the second or third sector (it has to be emphasize that none of them worked in a fish factory), only 9 of the interviews work in the first sector of Icelandic economy.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POLISH DIASPORA IN ICELAND

The history of Polish migrations to Iceland is relatively short (see: Wojtyńska 2011b) and is mainly associated with the fact that Iceland opened its labour market to citizens of new UE member states in 2006. Interestingly, despite this extremely brief period, less than 10 years, Poles have become the largest ethnic minority in Iceland. According to Statistics Iceland, in 2014 there were 10 224 Polish citizens living on the island, which means that Poles made up 49% of the all immigrants what was 3% of the total Iceland population (325 671 people in 2014). Polish immigrants are not only young in terms of length of the stay in the host country, but also in terms of the age: the largest percentage of immigrants is between 30 and 39 years of age, while the second largest age group ranges between 20 to 29 years. Polish migration to Iceland is driven primarily by the economic reasons, but it also has a cognitive aspect: young Polish immigrants wish to familiarize with foreign culture and to experience life abroad. Polish immigrants very often have no specific plans regarding their future on the island; which is consistent with the new trend of the fluid migration (Okólski 2009). Another significant hallmark of Polish immigrants is their lack of multicultural exposure, since only a small number of the interviewees had previous experiences of migration. Adaptation to Icelandic culture can prove difficult also for other reasons. First of all, Icelanders themselves have little experience with regards to multiculturalism. Since their country is geographically isolated, the population is highly homogeneous in terms of ethnicity and as a result Iceland has a short track record of being a host country. Furthermore, Iceland is not depicted in pop culture as often as the United States or the United Kingdom; thus, emigrating Poles have no opportunity to get to know Iceland and its culture even in indirect manner.1 Poles who leave

1 The United States and the United Kingdom are depicted not only in a multitude of literary sources, but above all in movies, music videos and popular music. For (young) Polish immigrants, these media messages are the main source of information about the society of the country to which they are heading. However, deriving knowledge from an image presented by the media can have unpredictable results. Initially cultural shock may be less pronounced in a society which is already known to the immigrant, even indirectly; on the other hand, the idealized image presented by various sources can differ significantly from the reality of the host society. In the longer term, this could result in problems with adaptation (see: APA 2011).
their home country got their knowledge from stories told within the immigrant social networks or from Internet forums; however, such presentation is highly subjective for Icelandic culture and society. As a consequence, the acculturation of Polish immigrants in Iceland has to ‘begin from scratch’, so to speak.²

A narrow cultural gap between both nations is a factor that should facilitate adaptation. Both societies are rooted in the Christian tradition. Although Icelanders are Lutherans and Poles are Catholics, cultural differences between the two societies do not have a fundamental axiological character. They are based only on different behaviours or ways of ascribing meaning.

THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF INTEGRATION

The cultural dimension of integration is one of the most-studied aspects of the life of immigrants in the host society. According to Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, cultural difference is the most important issue in contact with strangers, because culture plays a vital role in the formation of a community (Castles and Miller 2011). Culture is also the factor which most commonly constitutes the basis of a foreignness of immigrant, since an immigrant is not only unaware of the norms and values of a given society, its cultural canon, and existing norms of behaviour, but also, even after several years of residence, often does not know the language of the host society. Hence, he is treated like a foreigner at all times. Familiarity with the host culture is a necessary condition for full entry and access to the resources of a given society (Berry 1997; Kapralski and Mucha 2006) and for reducing the gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Being ‘one of us’ means that one possesses cultural capabilities shared by all: ‘a person is “at home” in the rhetoric of those with whom they share a mutual understanding of life, such that interaction is not dependent on long explanations but can proceed on the taken-for-granted premises of a set of shared assumptions’ (Morley 2003: 48).

The most often quoted theory of cultural adaptation is the one developed by Berry, which was used it in the following analysis as well. Berry distinguishes four strategies of acculturation (1997: 9–11). Choosing an acculturation strategy has to be accompanied by answering two fundamental questions: a) how important is cultural identity and its preservation? b) to what extent should individuals become involved in culturally different groups or stay within their own group? (contact and participation). From the perspective of the dominated group, its members can adopt one out of four strategies of acculturation: 1) assimilation, when the individual does not wish to maintain his/her cultural identity and seeks close contact with a foreign culture; 2) separation, when the individual wishes to maintain his/her identity and avoids contact with a foreign culture; 3) integration, when the individual wishes to maintain his/her identity and simultaneously seeks contact with a foreign culture; 4) marginalization, when the individual rejects both his/her own culture and the foreign culture. A key term in Berry’s concept is ‘change,’ which is processual in nature: ‘cultural changes (which are at the core of the notion of acculturation) range from relatively superficial changes in what is eaten or worn, to deeper ones involving language shifts, religious conversions, and fundamental

² www.forum.iceland.pl.
alterations to value systems’ (Berry 1997: 17). Also other researchers emphasize the processual character of adaptation; however, they mention other elements of culture as the ones that become adopted first. Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian Kwan point out that immigrants learn practical elements of culture first – i.e. elements that facilitate functioning in a new environment, such as language and the calendar of celebrated holidays (Shibutani and Kwan 1965). Milton Gordon (1964) and researchers from the American Psychological Association (APA 2011) have reached similar conclusions. Only after mastering the ability to communicate does the immigrant have a chance to get acquainted with the rest of the host country’s culture, such as the set of social structures, norms, customs, and cultural ways of doing things (Modood 2014: 30). As mentioned earlier, Polish immigration in Iceland has a short track record and is often temporary; thus, knowledge of the Icelandic language among Polish immigrants is limited. The interviewees themselves perceive this as a barrier to integration. Learning a new language and becoming acquainted with a new culture require time, dedication and frequently financial means – immigrants who do not plan to stay long on the island often view such an investment as excessive and unnecessary. The remaining factors that influence the process of integration include age – the process is fastest in children and slowest in the elderly (APA 2011). The cultural capital of immigrant and ability to convert it also influences the adaptation of immigrant to his/her new environment, not only in the cultural dimension, but in the economic dimension as well (Erel 2010). Not without significance for smooth adaptation is also the social context in which immigrants function: the openness of the host society, which manifests itself mainly in non-discrimination and support for immigrants (APA 2011), as well as functioning among host country nationals, are major factors that facilitate entering a new society. Gordon (1964) claimed that in order to become assimilated into the host society, an immigrant must enter its primary groups. This always leads to cultural assimilation. A research on female Thai immigrants in Iceland confirms Gordon’s thesis: immigrant women who have married an Icelander adapt to the host society much faster and more profoundly than those who have not entered such a marriage (Bissat 2008).

Studying the cultural adaptation of immigrants poses a difficulty. Namely, the researcher must resolve the following question: to which culture do the immigrants need to adapt? Is it the ‘official,’ canonical national culture of the host society, the one taught in schools? Or, perhaps, selected subcultures? Or should it be the culture of the (dominant) middle class? The theories of assimilation which remained popular in countries of the Anglosphere until the 1960s accepted the WASP – White Anglo-Saxon Protestant – culture (and material status) as the norm; in other words, the culture of the white, Protestant middle class, mostly men (see: Gordon 1964). Today, researchers are moving away from one-dimensional solutions, assuming that immigrants can adapt to various cultures or subcultures of the host society. One example of this approach is the theory of segmented assimilation formulated by Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou (1993). According to this theory, the result of assimilation is not necessarily unambiguous. Portes and Zhou distinguish three forms of immigrant assimilation: 1) acculturation and integration with the white middle class; 2) permanent poverty and assimilation into the lower class; 3) upward mobility in economic terms, along with a deliberate retention of values, culture and solidarity with one’s own ethnic group (Portes and Zhou 1993: 82). While the first two outcomes of the assimilation process obviously assume a change in cultural
patterns, the third outcome appears to involve full reproduction of cultural patterns from the country of origin. Such an interpretation is possible if we assume that the immigrant society lives in the host society in absolute isolation; otherwise even the patterns which the diaspora considers ‘Polish’ are reshaped by the impact of the host society and of globalized popular culture. One must also remember that even if the isolated immigrant community reproduces behavioural patterns typical of the parent society, these patterns are subject to two processes. On the one hand, immigrants tend to cling even more strongly to tradition and exhibit more conservatism than Poles who have remained behind in Poland (Krywult-Albańska 2015: 163), creating ‘a fixed and backward-looking image of their homeland’ (Morley 2003: 49); on the other hand, as time goes by, the behaviour patterns of immigrants have less and less in common with actual patterns from the culture of origin, since that culture also changes with time, whereas for immigrants, the point of reference is still the moment of departure from their homeland. Hence, over time, groups that refuse to adopt cultural patterns typical of the host society tend to develop a culture that is neither the culture of the host society nor the culture of the parent society.

Cultural pattern is a part of objective reality. An individual gets familiar with, values it and then practises it (Włodarczyk 2010). On the one hand the definition is broad, on the other it allows to take a closer look not only on a behavioural aspect of adaptation but also on the immigrant’s knowledge of the culture of host society. In this article I use the theoretical framework by John W. Berry discussed above. Therefore the main questions are: Do Polish immigrants seek contact with Icelandic culture? Do they want to adapt some Icelandic customs? Do they have knowledge of Icelandic culture? Are Polish immigrants ready to abandon their home culture? Do Polish immigrants spend their holiday time with Icelanders? These questions refer to two spheres of cultural life: religious holidays and leisure time.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AND THEIR CELEBRATION – THE THEORETICAL ASPECT

Looking at ways of celebrating holidays is significant inasmuch that it can indicate what values individuals are inclined towards and, consequently, what values they cultivate. A holiday is usually associated with the commemoration or celebration of an important event. Religious and state holidays are linked to different spheres of social life, but from a social point of view they both play a similar role. ‘A holiday is, in fact, the phase of social life in which its mechanisms become particularly explicit, especially its value systems. The latter, in turn, [...] fulfil a role of social stabilizers, provide real continuous support both to individuals and to communities, give an opportunity to choose and evaluate one’s own actions, help orient oneself within the reality, are necessary for shaping personality. A common system of values constitutes a foundation for interpersonal communication, for establishing lasting relationships and resolving conflicts’ (Żygulski 1981: 7). Holidays also fulfil more ‘technical’ functions in social life. In a migration situation, however, these functions reorganize lives of immigrants. Holidays are cyclical in character and follow a fixed calendar. They regulate the rhythm of the entire life of a community. The rhythm which the immigrant knows from his/her country
of origin usually differs from the one in the host country; thus, the immigrant must learn the new calendar. Dates, especially in the case of national holidays, are not random – there is always a reason why they are celebrated on this particular date. For immigrants, this can create additional difficulty in understanding the holiday, potentially intensifying their feelings of alienation. While Christmas and Easter are celebrated at the same time in Poland and in Iceland (albeit the number of free days is different), the dates and/or customs associated with other holidays may differ. For example, Icelanders do not celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on August 15, which is a feast day in Poland; on the other hand, the Icelandic holiday calendar contains Annunciation on March 25. January 6 is an interesting example. In Poland this is a religious holiday – Epiphany (Three Kings’ Day). Believers attend Mass on this date; lately they also increasingly participate in processions that go through the streets in Polish cities. In Iceland, January 6 is called Trettándinn – the Twelfth Night, and marks the end of the holiday period. It is the last night when fireworks can be set off, but also a night when animals speak in a human voice (in Polish tradition this occurs at midnight on Christmas Eve), it is possible to meet wandering fairies and elves and to dream about what this coming year will bring. It is also the night when the last mischievous elf – Yule Lad leaves (Kyzzer 2013). The date of these holidays in Poland and Iceland has the same origin – the ‘old Christmas’ in the Julian calendar. However, Poles and Icelanders celebrate them in entirely different ways.

Very often a holiday is embedded in the past of the given society: it may commemorate a victory over the enemy or an event that changed the existing way of living and thinking (Dyczewski 2012: 5). It can also be embedded in the mythical culture of the given country, or associated with astronomy or changes in the natural world. Since immigrants often do not know the origins of holidays, they not only do not understand the reason for celebrating, but are also they are unable to experience the values associated with the given holiday. For nationals of a given country, such a holiday helps strengthen ties, perpetuate social memory and build identity. It is also an opportunity to temporarily suspend conflicts. However, for immigrants, at least at the initial stage of their stay, it creates a very distinct boundary between them and the host society.

The possibilities for learning holiday practices are limited due to the infrequent recurrence of holidays. It is impossible to learn holiday traditions during work hours, even if the immigrant works among Icelanders. To learn the ways of celebrating holidays in the given country, one must either resort to knowledge gained from books or the Internet, or enter into closer relations with host country nationals. By observing how Poles celebrate holidays in Iceland and what they know about Icelandic traditions, one can attempt to assess whether they want to adapt to the host culture or are inclined to become culturally isolated.

Immigrants who possess knowledge about Icelandic holidays and traditions, as well as participate in Icelandic holiday celebrations, tend to exhibit behaviours that indicate progressive integration with the host country environment. On the other hand, those who lack basic information about Icelandic holiday traditions, cannot name Icelandic holidays and celebrate holidays in the traditional, ‘Polish’ way, in the company of other Poles, tend to isolate themselves from the Icelandic society. Thus, celebrating holidays can be viewed as an isolationist
or integrative practice, depending on the nature of the celebrations. In the following text, I will analyse how Polish immigrants in Iceland celebrate religious holidays and private festive occasions. I will also examine the extent of their participation in Icelandic holidays and their knowledge about those holidays.

(‘POLISH’) RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS IN ICELAND

When Oscar Handlin described the process of adaptation of immigrants from Eastern Europe in the United States of America, he particularly emphasized the role of religion and the Church in building a new life (Handlin 1973). Immigrants arriving in a new country had to leave their local beliefs behind. In the case of religion, the situation was different because the Church was and remains an institution with a global reach: ‘the trolls and fairies will stay behind, but church and priest at the very least will come’ (Handlin 1973: 105). Religion was the only constant link with the old world. Currently, the role of religion in maintaining identity has diminished, because participation in a globalized culture and the digital media made it possible to stay in daily contact with everything that is familiar and ‘has stayed behind.’

Poland is a country with a large Catholic majority. According to an official census conducted in 2011, 95.5% of Poles identify their religion as Roman Catholic (Wyznania religijne... 2013: 36). Surveys carried out by the Public Opinion Research Centre (Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, CBoS) show that for Poles, religion remains a very important part of life: 92% of respondents declare faith in God, 50% of respondents declare regular participation in religious practices, while another 37% declare practicing irregularly (Zmiany w zakresie... 2015: 3). According to the Eurobarometer survey carried out in 2010, Poland is in the forefront of the EU with regards to the percentage of inhabitants who declare faith in God – 79%. Paweł Boski strongly emphasizes the role of Catholicism in his analysis of the factors that influence Polish mentality and identity (Boski 2009: 373). Taking the above data into account, one can assume that religion is an important aspect of Polish culture not only for Poles living in their home country, but also for those staying abroad. The statements made by our interlocutors confirm this hypothesis.

The interviewees attached great importance to the celebration of religious holidays, especially Christmas. When asked how they spend Christmas, they emphasized that they try to recreate a ‘Polish’ atmosphere and organize their time in such a way so the holiday period spent in Iceland resemble Christmas at home as much as possible. It means that separation is the main strategy used by Poles: they do not try to get to know and follow Icelandic way of spending Christmas. Poles celebrate holidays in various circles: with their immediate family, if they have also immigrated to Iceland, with friends from Poland or with a partner; they do not celebrate together with Icelanders, unless they have entered an Icelandic family through marriage or a committed relationship. If the immigrant is alone, his/her acquaintances and friends take the place of family; in these studies none of the interviewees declared that they spend Christmas alone. Another holiday strategy adopted by Poles is a trip back to Poland, to their families, or inviting their families from Poland to Iceland.
So, what is Christmas in Iceland like for Poles? Traditional, home-like – Polish (interview 35). This traditional character would primarily consist in the above-mentioned emphasis on family activities and in preparing Polish, or resembling Polish dishes. Some of the interlocutors also mentioned the Christmas Midnight Mass (Pasterka, literally ‘Shepherds’ Mass’) as a very significant element of Christmas celebrations. The statement of the interviewees indicate that religion and ways of celebrating holidays are subject to the process of ethnicisation: during holiday celebrations, the study participants focus on those elements that remind them of Poland. They view Christmas through a prism of “Polishness” and overlook the common elements of this holiday, which could constitute a link between Polish and Icelandic celebrations. Both Poles and Icelanders go through the process of preparation for Christmas called Advent, they both decorate Christmas Trees (a tradition which was adopted by Catholics form Protestants), celebrate Christmas Eve supper and give presents on that day. In both countries it is time spent with family.

Generally speaking, statements tinged with longing and a feeling of “incompleteness” of the Christmas holidays prevailed. However, some interviewees noted a positive aspect of spending the holidays away from home – namely, fewer responsibilities associated with preparing and organizing the festivities:

I celebrate Easter, Christmas Eve better than at home, because here everybody will bring something, will do something and there is so much of everything. I’ll generally go visit someone who feels like organizing it. But, generally speaking, I think that if it weren’t for all those people around me, I wouldn’t really feel like doing all this stuff there. (Male, 27 years old, college education)

When asked about Icelandic holidays, the interviewees also tended to focus on Christmas. They usually know little about Icelandic holidays and holiday customs. However, they are aware of the differences, which they associate with Lutheranism. There was one exception – a female study participant who, for professional reasons, had to learn about Icelandic customs. She described them in the following way:

They have thirteen Santas. They call these creatures Santas, but in fact these are some kind of dwarfs or pranksters. They laugh that it’s the Christmas mafia, because there is mum Grilla, there’s some sort of dad and these thirteen rogues: one, for example, knocks on doors, another steals meat, while a third one pilfers candles or something; they are always doing mischief. There’s also a cat which, in the old days it used to be said that if someone isn’t wearing anything new for Christmas, this cat will kidnap him, so people had a good excuse to buy new clothing. And kids generally think only about these thirteen Santas, because for thirteen days before Christmas they arrive one after another, and for the kids here it’s paradise then, because they are given something every day for thirteen days in a row – unlike the Polish kids who receive gifts only on the 6th of December. Instead of the rod that is traditional in Poland, the children here get a potato if they have been naughty. (Female, 30 years old, college education)

Opinions on Icelandic holiday celebrations were divided. In some statements, a hint of disapproval was apparent: “Christmas is not a big religious experience for them”
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30 years old, college education). Here, the interviewee disparages the customs of the host society. This is quite a common attitude among immigrants, especially those who separate themselves from the Icelandic society. Małgorzata Krywult-Albańska has observed similar attitudes among Polish immigrants in Canada (Krywult-Albańska 2015).

Other interviewees, however, expressed interest in the Icelandic ‘otherness,’ evaluating it positively in comparison with Polish pre- and holiday customs:

First of all, their menu is different, so one has to start with the fact that we eat slightly different dishes. In the first place our pre-holiday period is very busy, it’s simply so intense, everything practically happens at the very last moment and people are nervous, tired, while here people go out into the streets, the streets are beautifully decorated, the shop windows look amazing and people go for walks, get together, it’s actually a tradition that you spend one day with the family, the next day you meet, drink chocolate, drink coffee, eat some of their special holiday dishes. And they go out to meet friends, like we do, the second day of Christmas [December 26] is sort of for people who aren’t family. But in the first place everything goes so very calmly, slowly, they enjoy this time. We, in turn, rush a lot, get annoyed, tired, so that’s the most important difference. (Female, 37 years old, college education)

Some of the interviewees strongly emphasized similarities between Icelandic and Polish holiday customs:

They eat a vigil supper on Christmas Eve too. On Easter, I don’t know if they have eggs blessed or not. But generally everything is similar, they have these Easter eggs, that’s all, I don’t see much difference. (Male, 27 years old, college education)

However, there are clear differences. First of all, in Iceland Easter is a long holiday – the first free day is Holy Thursday, the last one is Easter Monday. Like Poles, Icelanders go to Mass on Sunday; however, they do not practice the ritual of food blessing on Saturday. While Icelanders do have ‘these Easter eggs,’ their eggs are made out of chocolate; there is no tradition of decorating hen eggs. Polish immigrants continue to know little about Icelandic holiday celebrations, although the interlocutors attempted to find similarities.

The study participants exhibited rather conservative attitudes, along with a tendency to separate themselves from Icelandic culture. There is a group of immigrants who do not know the Icelandic customs and very strongly emphasize ‘Polish, traditional, family-oriented’ ways of celebrating religious holidays. Another group possesses some knowledge of Icelandic customs; however, the descriptions of Icelandic celebrations presented by Polish immigrants were fairly superficial. In general, Poles lack knowledge about Icelandic traditions. The interviewees, with minor exceptions, did not provide details about Icelandic celebrations, and even if more detailed information was provided, it did not necessarily match reality. There are also statements which show that Polish immigrants do try to find positive aspects of Icelandic holiday celebrations or to identify similarities between the Polish and Icelandic way of celebrating. Significantly, interviewees did not attempt to combine Polish and Icelandic traditions, even in situations when they did see positive aspects of the Icelandic way of celebrating. In the case of Christmas traditions the cultural patterns are rejected.
PRIVATE CELEBRATIONS – BIRTHDAYS AND NAME DAYS

In Poland, both birthdays and name days (patron saint’s days, in Polish: imieniny) are celebrated. The tradition of celebrating birthdays is relatively short and dates back to the systemic transformation that occurred in Poland in 1989. During the communist era, mostly name days were celebrated. Birthdays and name day celebrations are not restricted to the family circle; friends are invited much more frequently than in the case of the religious holidays discussed earlier. Name days in Poland are often celebrated at the workplace. Some Polish immigrants have followed the example of Icelanders and now only celebrate their birthdays, but many uphold the tradition of celebrating name days as well: one has to celebrate, otherwise we’d die of boredom here (Female, 26 years old, high school education).

Poles usually celebrate name days and birthdays in the company of their Polish acquaintances, as exemplified by the following fairly typical statement:

I invite a bunch of buddies from my home town. [...] And there’s a drinking session [...] Just like at home. Usually if people were working, then on Saturday, and afterwards in the evening we’d go to some disco, or to a pub somewhere, obviously. (Male, 42 years old, high school vocational education)

When asked about birthday celebrations of Icelanders, Poles explain that the former tend not to celebrate every birthday; rather, the Icelandic custom is to celebrate round anniversaries, inviting immediate family, relatives and friends. However, Poles are rarely invited to such celebrations. This lack of integration is mutual: Poles do not invite Icelanders and are not invited by them either. One of the reasons is their very limited ability to communicate. An exception are mixed Polish-Icelandic families where Polish traditions are adopted:

They don’t have name days, they don’t celebrate name days, but we try to celebrate name days, so my husband changed his name to Saint Nicholas so that he could have his name day. (Female, 30 years old, college education)

Transmission of cultural patterns among the respondents in case of private celebrations is asymmetrical. While Poles tend to adopt Icelandic way of celebrating birthdays, Icelanders apart from one, who has a Polish wife, do not follow Polish tradition of celebrating name day.

LEISURE TIME

Leisure time represents a separate category. This is an ambiguous term which has many definitions. For the purposes of this analysis, I am using the definition formulated by Joffré Dumazedier. According to this scholar, ‘leisure is time free from professional duties, family responsibilities and responsibilities outside the home, beyond sleep and physiological necessities; time to be used for rest, recreation and personal development’ (see: Sułkowski 1998: 112). A holiday is imbued with certain values, whereas free time, if not perceived as a value in itself, is axiologically neutral. On the one hand, leisure can be perceived as a kind of cultural and moral revolution (Sułkowski 1998: 111); on the other hand, it is associated
with free choice and individualism. It is not subordinated to anything external, as opposed to the holiday which, as mentioned earlier, is associated with obligations and with collective life (Zygulski 1981: 86). For the purposes of this paper, I am contrasting leisure time with paid work and household responsibilities; hence, leisure so defined will not include activities related to self-improvement, such as language lessons or training courses.

A study on the budget of free time in Poland, conducted by the Central Statistical Office of Poland (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, GUS) in 2013, distinguished five categories of leisure activities: 1) social life and entertainment; 2) use of the mass media: magazines, newspapers, books, television, radio (as well as the Internet); 3) voluntary work in organizations and helping others; 4) personal hobbies; 5) participation in sports and recreation (Budżet... 2015: 191–194). These five categories of activities constituted the basis for the further analysis. The aim was to determine in which activities Polish immigrants begin to follow Icelandic patterns.

Due to the unique character of the migration situation, in my analysis of free time I take into account not only the activities performed but also a company in which studied participants spend that time with.

Poles in Iceland tend to spend their free time primarily with other Poles, although they also occasionally meet with Icelanders or other foreigners. Spending time in the company of other Poles is a particularly prevalent pattern in the case of Polish couples. This could confirm Gordon’s hypothesis about entry into a primary group as a necessary prerequisite for further assimilation: as a couple we usually meet with Poles, like the last time when we went to a tea party organized by our friends, Poles. There were 21 people there, all of them Polish, and almost all were paragliding but that’s just a detail (Female, 30 years old, college education).

Poles often spend their free time at home, watching Polish television or movies on DVD or on the Internet (in Polish). The interviewees admitted that they do not use the Icelandic media for leisure pursuits. A very important leisure activity is maintaining contact with family in Poland. Thanks to the new media, this has become not only easy but – above all – inexpensive. Poles spend their free time with other Poles not only in private situations. Enjoying available entertainment in the city is not a popular way of spending leisure time. However, some of the interviewees declared that they spend their free time travelling around the island or, as Icelanders, go regularly to the swimming pool or the gym, as well as to clubs and discos. The paragliding group mentioned earlier is particularly noteworthy. Some Poles dedicated their time to photography and established the Polish Association of Photographers in Iceland ‘Pozytywni.’ At present, this organization is no longer all-Polish; it has transformed into an international club, which exemplifies a transmission of leisure patterns from Polish immigrants to other inhabitants of Iceland.

Another issue associated with social life and entertainment is the accessibility of venues in the city where Poles might spend their free time and participate in events. It turns out that Reykjavik is described as a city which is open to all of its inhabitants, regardless of their nationality. If Poles do not visit certain places, it is not because they would be unwanted guests there, but because of their limited cultural competences, mostly ignorance of the Icelandic language. For this reason, neither Icelandic cinemas nor theatres are popular among Polish immigrants. The Icelandic music scene, both popular and classical, is much more accessible, but here, too, the interviewees participate to a moderate extent at most. The only ‘Polish’ spot on the map of Reykjavik used to be a bar called Polonia – a Polish pub which was eventually
shut down, probably because of brawling on the premises. According to our interlocutors, the Polonia bar was a meeting place for those Polish immigrants who had the most problems with adaptation to their new environment. Poles living in Iceland do not have their ‘own’ place – there is no Polish cultural centre resembling the Polish Social and Cultural Association (Polski Ośrodek Społeczno-Kulturalny, POSK) in London. Nonetheless, Polish organizations in Reykjavik try to organize Polish events, such as the Saint Andrew’s day party (Andrzejki) organized by the Projekt: Polska Association in 2014. Around 30 people participated in this party that year. Other Polish events organized for Poles ‘in the city’ are very popular. Such events include screenings of Polish films at the Bio Paradis cinema (this is a cyclical event) and concerts of Polish performers (e.g. Boys and Basta in February 2015). A very important occasion was the performance of the Polish cabaret ‘Ani Mru Mru.’ The Polish-language portal Iceland News Poland (Iceland News Polska) helped organize this performance, for which tickets were sold out very quickly, long before the event. When describing this event, interviewees occasionally placed it in the category of a holiday, which shows that the limited possibilities of participating in Icelandic cultural life are strongly felt and immigrants feel a need to spend their free time outside the home.

Another potential activity undertaken during free time is voluntary work in organizations and involvement in helping other people. Poles rarely become involved in the life of organizations and in helping others. Those who are active in Polish organizations are usually involved in several of them; thus, very few people end up actually participating in this sort of activity (for more detailed description of immigrants’ involvement in civil society activities go to article by Małgorzata Budyta-Budzyńska in this volume).

The last leisure activity mentioned was participation in sports and recreation. Only a small percentage of study participants declared that they often go to the swimming pool. As should be noted, this is the most ‘Icelandic’ way of spending free time. Some of the interviewees emphasized the difference between Poles and Icelanders as regards spending free time: Poles tend to relax at home, in front of the TV, while Icelanders prefer more active pastimes. The most visible and active group is the above-mentioned group of paragliders, who not only meet regularly, but also successfully participate in competitions, representing Iceland.

BARRIERS

The question remains, why Polish immigrants in Iceland so rarely spend their free time outside the home, in an active fashion, which is fairly typical of Icelanders. Interviewees gave several explanations as regards to the predominant way of spending free time:

– The Polish minority in Iceland has migrated there mostly for economic reasons, hence the time budget is organized in a way that allows maximization of earnings. The number of jobs held significantly limits free time in a weekly budget of an immigrant:

they work three jobs simultaneously and they don’t even have time to rest [at home – M.N.], they don’t have time for anything else, because they came here to earn money, seven days a week (Female, 30 years old, college education).
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– Fatigue due to the fact that immigrants perform physical work:

And sometimes I’m so exhausted after work that I don’t even answer any phone calls. I don’t feel like it. I don’t feel like doing anything at all. I just want to take a bath and lie down, and turn the TV on (Female, 36 years old, high school education).

– Not enough acquaintances to make leisure pursuits outside the home seem worthwhile, because collective leisure is a learned model of spending free time.

Time at work flies by somehow. Recently we’ve started going to the gym to make this time nicer, and afterwards we go back home and go to sleep. That’s just life. I don’t have too many friends here to go out with, throw a grill party or something. And Poles are different abroad (Female, 20 years old, high school education).

– Household chores associated with typical patriarchal division of labour in the home.

– Limited financial means, particularly significant at a time of financial crisis:

I think there are many clubs here where parties or concerts of some sort are organized, and Poles don’t go there for the simple reason that for many it’s quite an expense. When earnings are not so high, going out to a bar or club really becomes a big expense. This money has to come from the household budget, I think there are such places, such clubs where Icelanders go and Poles don’t. (Female, 37 years old, college education)

Research into ways of spending leisure time in Poland clearly shows that Poles reproduce imported Polish patterns. The dominant way of spending free time is watching television, which is easily available at a low cost. For immigrants, television constitutes a link with their homeland; furthermore, as mentioned earlier, for many it is the only accessible form of entertainment because of the language barrier. Studies also show that sports or participation in organized activities take up a very small portion of Poles leisure time (for more information see: Budżet 2015; Myśliwska 2011).

CONCLUSION

According to John Berry’s theory, transmission or rejection of cultural patterns is a main indicator of whether the immigrant and the receiving society are integrating with or separating from each other. In case of Poles and Icelanders prevailing attitude towards patterns of foreign culture is rejection. Neither Poles nor Icelanders adapt the other group cultural patterns. Poles are focused on maintaining Polish traditions that support their national identity and therefore do not seek contact with Icelanders and their tradition. In return Icelanders have almost no opportunity to observe and transmit Polish patterns. The most discussed case was Christmas tradition, which paradoxically, as stated above, have common features in both cultures and transmission of cultural patterns could be expected.

However, some exceptions can be observed: there are Poles who adapt Icelandic cultural patterns especially if those seem more attractive than ones known from Poland. A fine
example is Icelandic peaceful way of life and relaxed attitude (even in hot period of Christmas preparation) which is appreciated and applied. Another field where Polish immigrants follow Icelandic patterns is leisure activities. There is a group of Poles who spend their free time in ‘an Icelandic way’ going to the swimming pools, taking trips to the countryside and being generally active (in contrast to staying at home in front of TV). Polish patterns spread across host society in a very limited way: Polish photography association has become an international club attracting both Icelanders and foreigners. Another case is an Icelander married to a Pole who adapted a tradition of having a name day.

Translated by Agnieszka Halas

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SOCIAL PRESSURE OR ADAPTATION TO NEW CULTURAL PATTERNS? SPORT-RELATED ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF POLISH MIGRANTS IN NORWAY

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this article is to analyse sport and physical activity as a means of transmission of cultural patterns and a significant factor in the acculturation of migrants. Basing on the example of Poles living in Norway, we discuss how joining physical and sports activities which are widely popular in the host society in fact means joining the mainstream of its culture. Considering that doing sports is a part of everyday life in Norway, joining such activity may be understood as incorporation into national mainstream culture. At the same time, our findings refer to the management of the so-called leisure time devoted to physical activity. The research is part of a project dealing with the sphere related to leisure, activities that are undertaken in free time and the attitude of Polish migrants towards keeping fit in Norway while undergoing the process of integration. Consequently the statements of the interviewees should be understood in a broader context referring not only to participation in Norwegian culture, but also to shaping the WLB of Poles living abroad. We would also like to take a closer look at the problems Poles encounter as far as leisure time and participation in Norwegian sports culture are concerned using Anna Horolets’ model of problems encountered by migrants in the sphere of leisure.

POLES IN NORWAY

From 2006, Poles are the largest immigrant community in Norway. Counting almost 100,000, i.e. almost 14% of all immigrant population in the country, they live in more than 400 municipalities and are the most numerous group in over a half of them

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1 At the end of the 4th quarter of 2015, the population of Norway was recorded at 5,213,985 (SSB 2016b).
Polish women migrate to Norway more and more often as they join their husbands and partners. However, women’s professional activity is much lower than men’s. Men often migrate first and are later joined by their partners or wives, often arriving with the rest of the family (SSB 2013b). So far, the research on Poles in Norway (see, e.g. Slany and Strzemecka 2016) has been conducted mostly in Oslo (and Akershus) area, the most popular destination among all migrants. According to the latest data, despite a low influx of Poles in 2015 (the lowest since 2005), they are still the largest group of migrants in Norway (95,700) (SSB 2016a). Another popular destination among Poles (second after Oslo and Akershus) is Rogaland area in the south-west of the country, where the Polish community is concentrated mainly in two towns – Stavanger and Sandnes.

Previous studies on Poles in Norway were devoted to such issues as their integration into the labour market (Anioł 2014; Friberg 2013) or healthcare system (Czapka 2014). More recent publications focus on various aspects of socialisation of Polish children in Norway (Ślusarczyk and Pustułka 2016; Strzemecka 2015) and on gender issues (Slany and Strzemecka 2015). Works devoted to different contexts of assimilation in Norwegian culture (e.g. on participation in cultural activities, see: Janaczyk 2014) are notably less frequent. The present article fills a certain niche in the research on Poles in Norway, as there are no studies assessing the transmission of cultural patterns and values in the field of sport and physical activity.

METHODOLOGY

The present article is based on the research material gathered within the interdisciplinary project entitled ‘Socio-cultural and Psychological Predictors of Work-Life Balance and Gender Equality – Cross-Cultural Comparison of Polish and Norwegian Families.’ The research focuses on the analysis of individual and shared patterns of balancing work and domestic duties by different couples. It was interesting to examine the relationship dynamics in the process of going through important life phases, such as migration to Norway, taking up new activities (e.g. sport), getting a new job, the birth of a child, or taking parental leave. Running the project within a three-year frame (2014–2016) enables capturing these dynamics. In 2014–2015, the study involved 185 in-depth interviews conducted with individuals and couples. They were run in four groups in two different cultural contexts (Polish and Norwegian): 23 Polish and Polish-Norwegian couples living in Norway and 25 Polish and Polish-Norwegian couples living in Poland.

The interviews used in this analysis were conducted in 2014 with Poles living in Norway (37 semi-structured in-depth individual interviews) and with Polish couples (same group of Respondents) in Norway in 2015 (17 semi-structured in-depth joint interviews). Some dyadic interviews devoted to Work Life Balance, leisure time activities and doing sports were

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2 The project is funded by Norway Grants in the Polish-Norwegian Research Programme operated by the National Centre for Research and Development. For details see the note on ‘Funding.’ The project consists of five complementary components (work packages). Each of them is run by a different research unit. Particular parts of the project concentrate on different goals, using different methodological approaches.
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characterised by a large consistency of answers within couples; both respondents (the man and the woman) usually agreed in their observations. Brief descriptions of the respondents provided in brackets indicate their age, sex and time they have stayed in Norway (as in February 2014).

FRILUFTSLIV AND SPORTS CULTURE IN NORWAY

As proved by physical activity of all age groups of both sexes, sport has acquired a very important position in Norwegian society. The country is famous for its winter sports, including ski jumping, cross-country skiing, speed skating and ice hockey. Such sports persons as the cross-country skier Marit Bjørgen and the ski jumper Anders Jacobsen are internationally renowned for their outstanding successes. Sport is a part of life of all Norwegians since the beginning of their education. Schools and kindergartens regularly organise various sports classes, both in winter and in summer (Koksvik 2009: 28–33).

Sports activity in Norway is promoted and coordinated by the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF), a continuation of the first Norwegian sports organisation established in 1861, rooted in defensive military activity of rifle squads. Initially established as a defence institution, the organisation was the subject of many transformations over the years. In the course of time, sport came to be perceived as a goal per se, scores and achievement became increasingly more important, while the importance of defence ability gradually declined. Today, NIF is the largest voluntary organisation in Norway: it has almost 2.5 million members (the total population of the country is a little over 5 million) gathered in over 11,000 sports clubs. The dynamic growth in NIF membership observed in 1965–1985 can be explained by the development of recreational sports and a considerable increase in sports activity among women, children and the youth. Sport began to be socially perceived as a valuable national resource. The ideas of the welfare state emerging after the Second World War favoured the promotion of sport as a cultural value. Sport was also promoted – as a cultural common good – by Rolf Hofmo, a Labour Party politician, a national sports organisation representative at the time. In 1992, the Norwegian parliament presented the idea of ‘sport for everyone’ as a long-term objective for the government. It was decided that it is in the public interest to ensure that every citizen has an opportunity to become involved and actively participate in broadly understood sports activity.

Outdoor recreation (Friluftsliv, literally ‘living outdoor’) is strongly connected with Scandinavian lifestyle, very particular about healthy habits and living in symbiosis with nature. According to Scandinavians, such a lifestyle brings the feeling of satisfaction and harmony (Henderson and Vikander 2007: 23–24). The Outdoor Recreation Act 1957 (Friluftsloven) providing legislation in this sphere refers to outdoor recreation as a way of spending leisure time and a form of socialising; it is perceived as healthy, environment-friendly and conducive

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3 Education does not differentiate our sample. Around 75% of our respondents have college education.
4 According to a Norwegian saying, Norwegians are born with skis on their feet.
5 Norges idrettsforbund og olympiske og paralympiske komité (NIF).
to wellbeing. The research on sport and outdoor recreation conducted from 2011 indicate that the level of such activity among Norwegians is very high. They also emphasise that people with higher education are the most active in sports, and the types of physical activity are strongly dependent on the place of residence (SSB 2014).

SPORT AND MIGRATION

In our work we would like to show how Polish migrants acquire patterns of a different culture in a particular domain: sport. They do this in the process of acculturation. We understand the notion of ‘acculturation’ in an ‘old-fashioned’ way, using the definition provided by Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton and Melvill J. Herskovits: ‘Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups’ (1936: 149). Our respondents are getting closer to a change of patterns but this does not mean that they change their culture completely. Linton et al. clearly distinguished ‘acculturation’ from ‘culture-change’ (as well as ‘assimilation’ and ‘diffusion’). The definition has a preliminary character, and serves as a frame of interpretation and analysis. The evaluated phenomena meet the definition in various ways, as the different respondents change (or modify) their patterns of physical activity to a greater or lesser extent, or sometimes not at all.

The theoretical approach from 1936 could be regarded as requiring ‘upgrading’. In our case, the work of Marisol Navas et al. (2005) can provide complementary means of analysis. The authors propose the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM) consisting of five fundamental points: ‘the first point is the joint consideration of the acculturation strategies of the immigrant group and of the native population [...]. Secondly, the differentiation of various immigrant groups by ethnocultural origin. In the third place, a number of psychosocial variables [...] and several behaviour indicators to check their predictive ability and modulating influence on the acculturation attitudes of immigrants and natives. These variables are supplemented by some sociodemographic data (e.g., age, gender, education level, religious and political orientation, reasons for immigrating, duration of stay in our country etc.). In the fourth place, the RAEM makes a distinction between acculturation attitudes preferred by both populations and the strategies finally adopted [...]. Finally, in fifth place, the consideration of various domains of sociocultural reality in which there may be different acculturation strategies and attitudes is proposed’ (2005: 26).

It would be fascinating to use all these points to investigate the empirical data we have obtained. Unfortunately, this would go beyond the scope of one article, therefore we consider only the fifth point indicated above. From the various domains in which migrants can go through the acculturation process, we distinguish the domain of sport (and leisure; sport, however, is not considered a domain of acculturation in the work of Navas et al.). As sport can be regarded in a broad sense, we propose to use the analytical framework developed by Anna Horolets (2012), who provides helpful categories to investigate the matter of sport and leisure.
Anna Horolets argues that leisure can be identified as one of the most important positive potentials of migration, although it is very rarely studied by migration scholars (Horolets 2012). The author observes that leisure of migrants is a form of their response to new conditions. It can also indicate the state of their physical and mental health and their ability to cope with transnational life (Horolets 2012: 2).

The main problem encountered in the study of the connections between the life of migrants and sport as an assimilation tool is a limited coverage of the subject and research regarding this sphere (Müller 2010; Arbena 1993). Although there are some institutional solutions referring to sport as a migrants assimilation tool (e.g. ‘European Sport Inclusion Network’ project supported by the European Union), survey analysis or research inspirations in this particular field are difficult to find. On the other hand, the analysis of migration of sportspersons and their careers (especially along colonial trajectories, e.g. in football, see: Giulianotti 1999) attracts considerable attention (see: Maguire and Falcous 2011; Poli 2006; Elliott and Haris 2015; Agergaard and Tiesler 2015), with some research institutions focused on the issue (e.g. the Sports Migration Institute at Aarhus University).

Considering Polish migrants living in Norway, reports by Horolets provide a useful reference framework. Presenting the main problems encountered by migrants in the sphere of leisure, she lists eleven barriers for migrants when implementing leisure activities of the host country: 1) time, 2) economic resources, 3) language, 4) knowledge about the ways of life in a new culture, 5) insufficient access to recreation, 6) discrimination, 7) networks/contacts, 8) cultural differences, 9) family centeredness, 10) knowledge of landscape, 11) fatigue (Horolets 2012). The map of the obstacles is based on four different approaches: 1) the marginality approach, 2) the opportunity approach, 3) the ethnicity approach and 4) the identity approach (Horolets 2012: 9–10). The implementation of leisure activities depends also on: 1) the period of residence abroad, 2) positive or negative experiences related to migration, 3) social class, 4) race, ethnicity and religion, 5) transnationalism, 6) global homogenisation and local diversity, 7) space, 8) type of activity, 9) the legal status (Horolets 2012: 14–18). Considering the nine dimensions, all our respondents are privileged: they are white, they evaluate their migration positively, they represent the middle social class, they are Christians, they do not experience discrimination regarding leisure, and they are EU citizens, which makes them legal residents in Norway. Below we explore whether Polish migrants in Norway encounter problems in these areas, and whether they influence their acculturation in the context of sports culture in the country. At the same time, we try to indicate other ‘distinctly Norwegian’ characteristics raised by the respondents.

RESEARCH FINDINGS – MIGRATION MAKES YOU FIT...

Before analysing the respondents’ answers it is necessary to consider example questions which can be asked in relation to physical activity of migrants. Do they acquire patterns of taking care of physical exercise (including their own and family leisure time devoted to sports activity) from Norwegians? What facilitates the adaptation of physical activity patterns in migrants and what hinders it? What is the influence of such activity on the process of their
adaptation in Norwegian society? How did the attitude of Poles in Norway towards physical activity change? Is sport an important socialising platform for the respondents’ children? Does sport appear as an egalitarian and equalitarian space (age, sex)?

**Time and money**

Polish migrants from our study declare that in Norway they have more leisure time to manage and more money to spend. They can afford the necessary equipment.

Well, here in Norway, I don’t know, you can buy this and that, no problem, you can afford many things, go skating, rent stuff. And generally everything is really at hand, so it’s a real change that you want to go walking or cycling. Yes, many things have changed. (Female, 22 years old, 7.5 years in Norway)

The respondents find sport available, also thanks to a broad selection of equipment they can rent. This helps in a situation when one is a beginner or has to provide equipment for more than one person. They also declare greater participation in sports activities than Polish respondents in Poland – their behaviour and practice change because everything is ‘at hand’.

Was there no money and no time for an aerobics season ticket or something? Well, we got low wages; maybe not very low, but we also had two kids and it was a problem, not only to find time to go there and to pay for it, but to do that if we both wanted to go; that would have been really hard. (Female, 35 years old, 7.5 years in Norway)

Other interviewees make similar comments about the change in their expenses, financial conditions and attitude towards the way of life.

The costs of this sport are lower here than in Poland. (Male, 37 years old, 2 years in Norway)

And it’s probably because of the wages. Back in Poland I always thought I would buy a ticket to a gym, but I always said it wasn’t the time yet, there were more important expenses. And here it just doesn’t matter so much, somehow. (Female, 38 years old, 2 years in Norway)

Sometimes they precisely call the change they experienced as the change of “lifestyle”. This change could be considered as a consequence of acculturation, since the new lifestyle is possible to implement thanks to patterns of daily routine in Norway.

What was most evident was a kind of lifestyle change. I started to sleep normal hours, work normal hours and suddenly, when I was still on my own, it turned out I had lots of spare time. It gets dark here only at 11 or 12 p.m. in summer, so I used that time as much as I could: I could go fishing, it was great there, I did rock climbing; it was great. (Male, 33 years old, 3 years in Norway)

In this way, sports expenses are not particularly high in relation to other needs and do not need to be specially justified. The respondents observe that sport is affordable and thus available to everyone.
Even comparing the prices of things you can buy – take a look at football, you can buy shoes for 500 zlotys [125 EUR – eds.] in Poland and this is a big expense; in Poland, I had to earn for these shoes, I was the first who bought shoes for this kind of money, and here spending 1,000 crowns [106 EUR – eds.] for shoes is not a problem. I think parents know best if they want to buy something. I think I can afford to buy equipment for up to 4,000 crowns [124 EUR – eds.] just like that. (Male, 26 years old, 5.5 years in Norway)

Talking about their past, the respondents refer to various phases of their lives in Poland. They recall the place of sport in their childhood and youth, before they had children. Regardless of their point of reference, they generally note that doing sports in Norway is ‘easier’, cheaper, and they have time for it. In Norway, sport is perceived as an element of everyday culture rather than a luxury, which also has some practical consequences, as Norwegians have better sports equipment:

Just look at skiing, everybody has a proper ski suit, goggles, helmet, everything...

Yes, it’s fully professional when it comes to this. (Male, 33 years old, 7.5 years in Norway)

The number of people practising cycling and other sports creates a feeling of safety. The Polish respondents underline this difference, comparing it to the situation they know from Poland.

And there’s safety: if someone does cycling, they have all the clothes for cycling, and these are not the same leggings as for jogging; the ones for jogging are different, with a little human figure jogging; and if someone goes, say, to a sauna and a swimming pool, they have a special bathrobe and a headband, they have everything... If someone does sports here, they care about safety a lot. See this, our kids were sledging and skiing yesterday and they all had helmets. (Female, 33 years old, 2.5 years in Norway)

Norwegian patterns – the influence of foreign culture on leisure time practices

The interviewees admit that sport is omnipresent in Norway: everyone does it regardless of age and season. In their accounts, Norway appears as a country where nearly everyone does jogging or cycling. The respondents notice that Norwegians treat sport almost as a religion.

For sure, all this skiing, at least cross-country skiing, is just a religion in this country. (Female, 35 years old, 7.7 years in Norway)

Skiing is very popular in Norway. Disciplines changing with every season seem to be an observed part of Norwegian lifestyle.

[They all do] cycling and jogging; they are very much involved in sports, all year round. Everybody does skiing in winter; they take trips to the mountains; and it’s also in line with a kind of Norwegian lifestyle, these mountain hikes, longer or shorter. There are plenty of people where I work, middle aged or even elderly ladies, and they have to go on a trip every week, they can’t spend their weekend without going somewhere for a walk, even if it’s only on the beach or somewhere nearby, but this outdoor recreation is a must. (Female, 29 years old, 3.5 years in Norway)
As a result, our interlocutors notice differences in the level of fitness between Norwegians and Poles:

(R-Researcher): And do you think Norwegians are a more fit nation than Poles?

Definitely; absolutely; when they are in their fifties or sixties... (Female, 34 years old, 6 years in Norway)

The above words underline the significance of a particular sociodemographic indicator (age in this case) in the context of the RAEM model (Navas et al. 2005). In Poland, age can have a modulating influence, as it is common for older people not to take part in fitness activities. In Norway, however, as our respondents observe, age is not an obstacle in the acculturation process in the domain of sport.

Even if they are not aware of the government policy towards sport, Polish migrants from our study seem to confirm its results (i.e. mass sports activity). The fact of noticing sports activity among Norwegians makes them able to face their own situation, e.g. admitting that they are not active themselves. The respondents also notice they could use the opportunities and take over this kind of behaviour from Norwegians. They do not identify other barriers than those dependent on their own urge, will or laziness. It is a very different situation than that in Poland, where some objective barriers (expenses and time) were present.

Frankly speaking, we have access to the gym here, but we don’t go; it’s such a pity... (Male, 34 years old, 6 years in Norway)

If I wanted, if it was my nature, then there is no problem – everyone here goes jogging; women have prams with few-month-old babies in them and they push these prams and go jogging; babies are used to it. (Female, 34 years old, 6 years in Norway)

Asked about ‘pressure on sports lifestyle,’ the respondents think it is not about pressure or influence. The sheer presence of people doing sports in public space, parks, housing estates, mountain areas and at work makes them feel ‘encouraged’ to do sport. It seems everybody does sports every day, regardless of their age and the weather.

No pressure, but I like that; I don’t feel the pressure, but a cool lifestyle which is not pretended; it’s kind of normal to do it, but there is no pressure. (Male, 29 years old, 3 years in Norway)

It means there is no pressure but there is strong encouragement, for example at work: they buy t-shirts, organise some trips, and fund all these trainings. I mean, not everything, but there is a lot. (Male, 35 years old, 7.7 years in Norway)

The respondents admit that seeing younger and older people around doing sport is motivating rather than pressing or demanding, especially when the weather is not mild and sunny.

On the one hand yes, because wherever you look they go roller-skating or cycling, they go jogging, skiing, snowboarding and everything. There are always a lot of people in the gym. It’s a bit of a motivation. Well, you can see the younger, the older. (Female, 22 years old, 7.5 years in Norway)
It’s motivating when you see these elderly people jogging even in the rain; sometimes you come back by car from your parents and you see two guys jogging in heavy rain. Norwegians have got this motivation of some sort and you just get infected. (Male, 26 years old, 5.5 years in Norway)

Sport for everyone – access and diversity

Comparative research indicates that sports activity among Poles is almost two times lower than among Norwegians (Biernat and Piątkowska 2012). Norwegians (and Scandinavians in general) are more ‘visible’ doing sports. Sport is also easily noticed because different people (regardless of their age and sex) do it on a regular basis. It is also accessible as a result of incentives from employers to do sports, even during working hours.

Yes, but we got spare time for it. For instance, at my previous work, way back north, we had, I think, an hour and a half to exercise and we could go to the gym, go skiing, or go home, but theoretically it was time for exercise. What’s striking is that everybody really exercised then, nobody went home to see their kids a bit earlier. I mean, we had a cultural mix there at the time: we had a Hungarian, some Russians, and a Pakistani. Us and Norwegians, we used that time; the Hungarian – so-so; Russians didn’t use it at all; and that was a totally different way of thinking: you get one hour for free, so you go home. (Male, 35 years old, 7.7 years in Norway)

The Polish respondents often indicate the infrastructure of the workplace and attitude of employers towards sport as really encouraging when it comes to making a decision about when they can practice sport.

For example, at our workplace we have an opportunity to exercise in the middle of a day. I think you can use the gym for half an hour every day. People do jogging, they don’t make a problem about that here. (Male, 35 years old, 7.7 years in Norway)

As for the bike, why do I also use the bike – because I have a changing room at work, I’ve got a place for my bike where I can park it even with a trailer; there is a shower downstairs, a locker, so I can take a shower. Many people cycle to work at my workplace. (Female, 35 years old, 7.7 years in Norway)

The absence of a feeling of exclusion from the group of sportspersons also results in the omnipresence of sport. You do not have to be in ideal shape to show up in the gym as no one feels judged. It seems that the respondents and their decisions whether to undertake sports activity are not constrained by shame and fear of judgmental attitudes. On the other hand, women in Poland (in another part of the project, conducted in Poland) confess to such constraints. This difference can indicate the acquisition of new cultural patterns, which do not require women to look ‘attractive’ at all cost as much as in Poland. We can say that in Norway body and gender issues related to it are less problematic in making a decision to take physical exercise or not.

The main difference in Poland is that women are often ashamed to go to the gym because they are quite fat and everybody would see that, and here you can go to the gym and a bunch of ‘walruses’ would do their workout and there is no problem. I don’t look at them, they exercise, and they do what they want. (Male, 26 years old, 5.5 years in Norway)
Actually, I was like this too; Jarek went to the gym, I was just hanging around there and he had a workout plan, did his exercise, a running track, until I asked a super trainer for help, and now that I have a plan, I’m more confident. Other people do their exercise as well, so they want to lose weight or get in shape, so I’m not some kind of a freak here, I’m not strange and so on; but as a matter of fact I somehow noticed, oops, am I just saying I’m fat? So, I was reassured, but really there was something that I felt a bit ashamed, I’ve got some little complexes. (Female, 22 years old, 7.5 years in Norway)

This confirms that financial resources and time do not have to be the only barriers in doing sport, as there are also mental barriers referring to the depreciation of one’s physically unfit body. Encouragement to practise sport at work sometimes takes unusual forms:

Twice a year we have this thing... They bring us a large chart with our names on it and we are supposed to, for example, come to work by bike or walk there for the whole month.
R: A chart and what then?
For example, there is a whole month there, day by day and, you know, there are, say, twelve of us at work, so there are twelve rows with our names and what we did each day, like whether you jogged or walked there, and you have to write it down; it’s a kind of eco action or something. (Female, 36 years old, 9 years in Norway)

A network and contacts

Doing sports, which is visible everywhere, is not restricted to the representatives of a certain class. Also, it is more than a cultural norm or a form of egalitarianism. People who practise sports create a motivational network, which shows to others that it would be worthwhile to do something about their fitness. In this way, apart from ‘cultural pressure’ described above, there is also a relation pressure in the micro-worlds. Colleagues, neighbours or parents of other children popularise physical activity by their own example and by talking about sport.

They motivate me so much that sometimes I have this bout and I go running every second day, because when a fifty-year-old guy comes in and takes off his shirt in the locker room and looks better [than me], I feel foolish. (Male, 34 years old, 6 years in Norway)

Perhaps there is no such notion that it’s appropriate or necessary to do sport, but it impressed me a bit... When I drove to work, not in this job, but in the previous one, the working hours were, say, from seven to three, so I went by car. It was about two or three years ago. I drove before seven, I looked around and what I saw was elderly people and women cycling, in pouring rain or high wind, cycling all the time, cycling to work. And so it started from this really, that I went... given that I have ridden a bike forever, as I said, in Poland back and forth and there... (Male, 30 years old, 7.5 years in Norway)

Contact with others stimulates inner reflection and prompts a sense of ‘inner obligation’:

I mean, finally reason must triumph because we know very well that such an attitude to sport is not very beneficial for health, so sometimes you need to do even the thing that... inner pressure. But the fact is that you can sometimes have the impression that here you see all these people cycling and jogging and it’s really a crowd. (Male, 29 years old, 3.5 years in Norway)
But not in Poland; I didn’t do sports in Poland.
R: But why? Didn’t you have time? Weren’t you in the mood?
I wasn’t in the mood, I didn’t have such pressure. (Male, 30 years old, 7.5 years in Norway).

It is worth remarking that the ‘network’ patterns motivating people to do sport have a deeper meaning embedded in the socialising policy in Norway. Sport is a tool used to bring up children, hence a great importance attached to sport in various socialising agendas: on the one hand, in the organisational and formal aspect (schools), on the other – in the family sphere. Therefore it is not only the matter of ‘unofficial’ patterns of culture but also an official strategy implemented by government policy. As a result, migrants seem to be obliged to reflect on both habitual and policy patterns. For example, they cannot avoid sport as a socialization tool in educational institutions.

It is a Norwegian attitude. (Male, 35 years old, 7.7 years in Norway)

And many people go to kindergarten with this trailer when spring comes. I liked it. (Female, 35 years old, 7.7 years in Norway)

You don’t carry your kid in a trailer, [then] something is wrong with you. (Female, 35 years old, 7.7 years in Norway)

Some of the respondents do see the strong influence of the surrounding ‘world full of trailers’ on individual decisions regarding sport activities.

Sport is high on the agenda here, in family life and in life generally, isn’t it? If I was to start jogging it would probably be here and not in Poland. Because here it’s something perfectly natural and very many people go to gyms of various kinds... (Female, 34 years old, 6 years in Norway)

Observing Norwegians and other migrants doing sports, it is easy to get to know a contact network, to build contacts based on shared activity, and to learn to use Norwegian space, which has a lot to offer as far as sport is concerned.

There is much more... Well, for example in Poland, in our town, as big as Stavanger, I wouldn’t know where I can play squash, where I can... now I don’t know... Here, I know where to go skating, where to play tennis, where to go bowling... there’s plenty of it and it’s advertised and easier to notice and probably more people take part in it; and I know where to get some exercise, where they get some exercise... (Female, 27 years old, 3 years in Norway)

The natural environment

The interviewed Polish migrants also appreciate the role of the natural environment in shaping the habit of sports lifestyle. In addition to the accessibility of infrastructure, incentives from employers, and sport as a ‘national good,’ there is also the extraordinary charm of Norwegian nature.

First of all: time, second... We lived in Warsaw before, so, naturally, when you wanted to go jogging in the forest you had to go to the suburbs of Warsaw, right? And jogging in the city
Radosław Kossakowski, Magdalena Herzberg-Kurasz, Magdalena Żadkowska

is, well, not very pleasant. And here the air is cleaner and it’s enough to leave home and you have some hills or forest five minutes away, you can go jogging there. There are just oodles of gyms, I really don’t understand how they all manage to stay in business because they are really everywhere. There are about five here within one kilometre and all of them are open. And at the workplace it’s also visible that everybody takes advantage of this. (Female, 33 years old, 3 years in Norway)

The respondents also notice that taking advantage of the natural environment is common in Norway.

No. But it’s nice to see how they... Although first I was stunned because I got up, barely opened my eyes, and I saw people already coming back from the lake, from their cycling tours, from their jog. Last November my mum was here and I say: ‘Hey mum, let’s go to town, there’s the old town there, we’ll go and I’ll show you the centre.’ We met one person in the centre, and it was like seven or eight in the evening. The next day we went here around the lake and my mum says: ‘Gosh, there are bigger crowds by the lake than in the town centre.’ They go for walks, they walk their dogs, they ride bikes and really we met plenty of people, and there – one or two people who were just walking, plus the two of us. (Female, 38 years old, 1.5 years in Norway)

Fatigue and work–life balance

However, it certainly cannot be assumed that the mere fact of settling in another country, even as sport-friendly as Norway, results in more ‘pro-active’ habits. Indeed, in some cases it is quite the opposite:

I used to cycle everywhere. When I left the house I was on my bike right away. It was a means of transport for me; I cycled rather than walked. [illegible]. And here, it stopped a bit, unfortunately. It’s because of the environment here, hills, the weather; you go out in the morning, the sun is shining and after five hours it’s pouring and windy. (Male, 37 years old, 7.5 years in Norway)

R: So there is less sport here for you?
Less. I am in the mood, I want to do it; there is this need somewhere in me, but I just sit, I stand in one place and do nothing. We go cycling, yes, but these trips are a joke. I take them to the kindergarten in a trailer but it’s only three hundred metres. (Male, 37 years old, 7.5 years in Norway)

In the airport, before migrants fly to Stavanger one can often hear: ‘Now I’m going to rest,’ which they say although they are going to work. Considering that Work–Life Balance is promoted in Norway, Polish migrants from our study admit they are not expected to work overtime. Moreover, such work is so expensive for employers that it tends to be avoided. Consequently, there is more time left and, as mentioned above, it is used by migrants also for doing sports. Migrants who have stayed in Norway for some time comment that after the acclimatization process in the new place they are less tired than in Poland and that they find time to rest. They admit that employers promote not only sport but also leisure among workers; for instance, they can receive a massage within working hours as a bonus:
Social pressure or adaptation to new cultural patterns? Sport-related attitudes...

I had a very nice situation for a while: as soon as my boss saw I was tired, she said: ‘take a massage,’ for instance. She gave me this form, for example. (Female, 33 years old, 3 years in Norway)

Language and other barriers

The interviews did not include mentions of the language problem in the context of doing sports. English is widely spoken in Norway and a substantial proportion of notices, terms of use, signs or instructions are available in English; they can be found on tourist routes, in stadiums, sports halls or swimming pools. On the other hand, the language of training or sports courses may be a problem. While children easily get used to receiving instructions in a foreign language, this is not necessarily the case among adults, which might explain the high popularity of (home) workouts ‘with Chodakowska’ (one of the most popular fitness trainers in Poland) among Polish female migrants.

The interviewed Polish migrants in Norway seem to be less affected in the eleven problem areas mentioned by Horolets: they claim they have more free time, enough money and access to recreation; they do not feel discriminated because of their nationality, age or gender; their family is not an obstacle, as it is easy to actively participate in leisure with or without family members; they feel less fatigue. The language and networks (numbers 3 and 7) are the only obstacles for some activities. The majority of our interviewees observe that in Norway they have more leisure time and spend more time with the family than they used to before emigrating from Poland.

In the post-migration stories of the respondents, sport appears as an essential cultural pattern which is not institutionally imposed but nevertheless becomes an important determinant changing the attitude to one’s life and everyday habitus. The importance of sport and its cultural ‘obviousness’ in Norway does not remain unnoticed by migrants. Poles living in Norway mention that doing sports is easier (access to infrastructure, employers’ funding sports activities). Most of all, the universal presence of sport in every social group (from children to elderly persons) helps doing sports without feeling ashamed or alienated. The respondents point out that – unlike in Poland – most sports in Norway are done by both men and women (e.g. a high popularity of women’s soccer), and that intensive socialisation regarding sports activity starts early in school curricula. The interviewees declare they have significantly more leisure after their migration to Norway. Sports activity is one of the forms of spending their free time and becomes a crucial element of their life.

CONCLUSIONS

The statements of the respondents indicate that sports activities (a constitutive part of Norwegian identity) do not leave Polish migrants indifferent. They realise that doing sport is an important element of everyday routine in Norway, where sport belongs not only to leisure time, but is also included in educational strategies and work environment. Migrants experience the presence of sport, they feel that doing sports is not only physical activity, but also constitutes a relevant element of participation in the culture of the host country. To
a considerable extent, doing sport ‘the Norwegian way’ means participating in Norwegian culture as ‘sport’ constitutes an important domain of host culture. This can be identified as a cultural change, considering that the migrants arrived from the country where sports activity is not part of national identity and culture, but tends to be associated with middle-class life style of the well-educated population from large urban centres. Individuals migrating to a different country gain better chances of assimilation by learning the host language, becoming incorporated into the official work environment, and getting a new circle of friends. In Norway, doing sport is another ‘channel’ of assimilation with the culture of the host country. The results of our research indicate that migrants encounter fewer obstacles in Norway than in other migration destinations. In many cases, it is easier for them to keep fit in Norway than it used to be in Poland. In this way, sports activity can increase the opportunities for migrants to get into the mainstream culture of the host country.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


The dynamics of the development of modern information and communication technologies (ICT) in recent years have become an important research subject. Links between ICT developments and international migrations are studied particularly in the context of the paradigm of transnationality. New technologies form the basis for transnational phenomena, mainly because they allow for mutual, dynamic, instant, frequent and efficient communication between actors of transnational processes – the migrant, and the receiving and the sending countries (Vertovec 2004: 219; Nedelcu 2012). They also change the level, intensity and speed of interaction between immigrants and their countries of origin (Vertovec 2009). One of the aspects of this new communication is also the transmission of patterns of cultural practices (as an element of social remittances), frequently modified, leading even to the creation of a so-called third culture in the country the immigrant has settled in (Mucha 2003: 170–171). Thus, engagement with ICT becomes a form of (virtual) transnational practice (Pustułka 2015: 100), and these migrants can be termed connected migrants (Diminescu 2008: 568) or online migrants – categories that link homo mobilis and homo numericus (Nedelcu 2012: 1352).

The role of ICT in migration processes to a large extent concentrates on analyses of computer mediated communication (CMC) between migrants and their families and friends in sending countries: how these influence the adaptation, acculturation and integration processes. New technologies aid these processes by providing constant support from the social networks that exist in the migrant’s world, at the same time – paradoxically – enhancing their ancestry ‘roots’ (Boski 2014; Cemalciar, Falbo and Stapleton 2005). What is also essential is what and how (using which technological channels) the migrants communicate with their close family and friends. Research shows the existence of twofold relations: on
the one hand, the use of modern technologies in the country of destination is based on the application patterns garnered in the country of origin; on the other – migrants also adapt the modes of ICT use of the destination country (Fairlie, London, Rosner and Pastor 2006; Hamel 2009: 9).

The aims of this paper are to present the results of a pilot survey of the use of ICT by educational migrants (foreign students in Poland) in the context of their adaptation, as well as to localize this study within a broader context of research into relations between migrations, ICT and adaptation processes (adopter new cultural patterns) among foreign students. These transmissions are always multilateral processes.

FOREIGN STUDENTS AS COMMUNICATING DIGITAL NATIVES

The phenomena of student mobility frequently precede the migration of a skilled workforce (Castles and Miller 2012), which makes this research area particularly significant. Foreign students are a specific group of temporary migrants. They belong to the group of so-called sojourners, that is persons who stay abroad for a set time (6 months to 5 years on average), and education is their aim (Bochner 2006). Similar to the ‘local’ students, the foreign students also belong to the generation of so-called digital natives (Prensky 2001: 1–6), that is those persons, for whom ICTs are an element of everyday life, something obvious, routine. The presumed ease of use of modern technologies does not necessarily mean that they are used with equal intensity on each of the communication levels. Technology-literate foreign students can use ICTs either extensively or rarely (escapist strategy) and this depends on their motives. Low levels of ICT use can result from their ideological inclinations (resistance to being constantly ‘connected’) or personal ones (poor quality of social contacts preceding migration, or contacts that for some reason are not valued – and thus there is no need to transfer them to virtual sphere) (Pustułka 2015: 113–116).

Migrating foreign students form a specific international environment in which the question of adaptation to new social conditions becomes of particular importance. Relationships created here may be identified on three different levels: 1) national/local (communication with inhabitants of the host country, but also a kind of glocalization – communication with foreign students of other nationalities, forming the ‘community of students’ interests’); 2) transnational (communication across borders with persons living in the countries of origin, but also the search for contacts within diasporas; this is grassroots, linear transnationality; see Vertovec 2009); 3) international (global communication – e.g. with friends throughout the world).

The close social networks of foreign students (in the context of the support they receive) frequently cited by literature are: the ‘familiarity circle’ (Nowicka 1993: 24) – the network of students-compatriots (with whom the contacts are usually most intensive), the local students (this is usually the least developed network, although contacts within it offer the largest support for adaptation processes of foreigners) and other foreign students. These former ones usually offer social support, but barely influence the adaptation processes (Biłas-Henne and Boski 2014: 180).
CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH ON ICT AND MIGRATIONS

International research on ICT and migrations mainly focuses on the use of ICT by migrants in the context of their national identity or ties other than national/ethnic, e.g. labour-relations, family migration, discriminated group etc. (Owen et al. 2003; Diminescu et al. 2010; Komito and Bates 2011). Another significant research theme is transnationalism in its various aspects, concerning also new technologies (Vetrovec 2012; Diminescu 2002, 2008, 2010; Panagakos and Horst 2006; Nedelcu 2009; Metykowa 2010). Frequently, ICTs are discussed in the contexts of diasporas and their role in creating social remittances. In this type of studies, the technology itself also becomes the tool of analysis, such as internet forums or social networks (Oiarzabal 2010; Fortunati, Pertierra and Vincent 2011; Kissau 2010).

A separate group of research focuses on migrant adaptation in the context of the use of ICTs. Stephen Croucher has proposed a theoretical framework for research into the influence of social network use on the cultural adaptation of migrants. According to him, the use of social networks in the process of cultural adaptation influences both the relationships of migrants with the culture of their host countries and internal group communication (within the group of migrants) (Croucher 2011: 261–262). Prue Holmes and Annick Janson (2008: 59) stress that new technologies help to limit the feeling of remoteness and solitude. Guo-Ming Chen, in turn, forms the thesis that ‘the social interaction conducted through new media by immigrants proves to be a critical element that can determine whether they can successfully adjust to the host country’ (Chen 2012: 6). This conforms to the results of research on foreign students conducted by Zeynep Cemalcilar, Toni Falbo and Laura M. Stapleton (2005: 103): ‘this continuous contact [via ICT – K.P.] has a positive effect on the sojourning individuals’ maintenance of home identity and perceptions of available social support, which combine to affect the students’ adaptation to the new culture.’

A report entitled ‘The State of the Art of Research in the EU on the Uptake and Use of ICT by Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities (IEM)’ identifies fields that are currently insufficiently explored, including ‘learning mobility in the digital age: how ICTs are used in the new learning paths that young people in Europe (who include a growing number of second and third generation immigrants) are exploring, mixing organized traditional education, independent learning, work experience and volunteering’, especially in the comparative perspective. There is still a lack of research on ‘the use of the internet by immigrants and ethnic minorities’, for example in the context of the types of webpages that they visited (national, regional, or local) or on a basic level, concerning ‘migrants’ digital literacy, their attitudes, skills’ as well as IT knowledge (Borkert, Cingolani and Premazzi 2009).

In Poland, the connection between issues of student migrations, new technologies, adaptation processes and the transmission of cultural patterns is still scarcely discussed. However, numerous and multifaceted studies of foreign students occur. In recent years, with the growing numbers of foreign students and internationalization processes of universities, this issue has become even more popular. Polish researchers studying foreign students concentrate on the following topics: quantitative analysis concerning the size and national composition of the group of foreigners studying in Poland; problems of adaptation and social integration; job market activity and the fates of foreign graduates of Polish universities; Polish origin
students (especially in the context of adaptation, transmission of cultural patterns, educational and personal choices); teaching Polish language (Żołędowski 2010: 91–110).

Several studies are particularly interesting. One of these is the publication by Paul de Carvalho on adaptation of foreign students in Poland and their attitudes towards Poles. The author developed an ‘adaptation index’, made of correlated partial indexes: of adaptation to climate, of adaptation to living and material conditions; of adaptation to requirements of the curriculum of study and of mental adaptation to the social environment (Carvalho 1990). In 1993, a study edited by Ewa Nowicka and Sławomir Łodziński was published, concerning the attitudes of foreign students to Poles and the familiarization of those foreigners with the host society. In 1998, Julia Gorbaniuk published an article based on research into students of Polish origin in Lublin, focusing on the adaptation difficulties faced by that group. Another research area was started by Janusz Mucha in his research on students of Polish origin from the former USSR within the situation of the ‘cultural contact’ (Mucha 2003, 2005).

Important research in the field of student migrations to Poland was also conducted in the years 2001–2002 by Justyna Godlewska. She turned her attention to the formation of two groups of foreign students: those coming from the poorer countries of Eastern Europe and those who were better off (Godlewska 2004: 26). It is in this context that Cezary Żołędowski wrote about two strategies used by Polish universities in relation to foreign students: the strategy of ‘mutual understanding’ in relation to those poorer students from the East and the strategy of ‘income creation’ in relation to those who were better off ( Żołędowski 2010). In 2014, another important study was published. It was based on research conducted in four academic centres in Poland. The title phrase of ‘two sides of the moon’ refers to the twofold dimension of the presence of foreign students in the university environment: on the one hand, the study describes the results of research into Polish attitudes towards foreigners studying in our country, on the other – the attitudes of foreigners towards the reality of the host country, that is relationships from the perspective of the Other/Alien (Kawczyńska-Butrym 2014).

The interesting perspective of intercultural psychology on the adaptation of foreign students is provided by Monika Biłas-Henne and Paweł Boski. This research into the psychocultural adaptation of Erasmus Programme students in Europe convinced the authors to introduce the notion of the ‘multicultural buffer’. It is the environment of international students limited to a location (e.g. a city) that plays a significant role in the adaptation processes of foreign students and social support is the factor influencing those processes (Biłas-Henne and Boski 2014: 181).

In turn, Karolina Łuksamiewicz (2010) analysed the issue of the role of ICTs in the adaptation of Chechen refugees arriving in Poland. She asked if the obvious logistic support which the Internet offers a newcomer (the exchange of practical information on forums) also facilitates getting in touch with people from outside their culture and brings them closer to this new reality. It turned out that although the Internet was a great facilitator for job market contacts or logistic issues connected with the new place, in the sphere of cultural, social or political adaptation it did not play a positive role. On the contrary – it brings the incomers ‘closer’ to their original homeland. Paula Pustułka, based on research on Polish post-accession migrants, forms a matrix of ways ICTs are used during migration, in which digital literacy level and the motivation to start those forms of communication are the primary variables.
At the same time, she stresses that intensive use of new technologies is not always tied with migration. It is also not ‘obvious’ for all social groups and does not necessarily guarantee the filling of the deficit of closeness in terms of previously existing social bonds (Pustułka 2015).

ADAPTIVE PROCESSES OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

Adaptation of migrants is a process or state concerning the ability of maintaining a balance in the new, different environment. In synthesizing the approaches present in the literature, John W. Berry (1997: 13–14) analyses three different types of adaptation: psychological (the feeling of personal and cultural identity and satisfaction in a new cultural context), socio-cultural (the ability to cope with problems, especially in the field of family, educational and professional life) and economic (getting a satisfactory job position in the new culture).

Simplifying, we may speak of mental adaptation – in the sphere of individual experiences (this occurs when a migrant is satisfied with living in the new place and has more positive than negative experiences) and the practical one – in the sphere of contact with the receiving society (measured by efficiency of action and goal achievement in the new reality). Each migrant chooses an individual adaptation strategy. They are of two basic types:

1. instrumental (task oriented, ‘shallow’) – starting and supporting social contacts with representatives of the receiving society is aimed only at achieving intended goals (e.g. graduating from a course of study); this strategy may adopt different variants, depending on the scope and emotional importance of the contacts that are initiated;
2. autotelic (identification oriented, ‘deep’) – good social contacts with immediate environment (academic one) are the aim in themselves (Nowicka 1993: 31–33).

The above strategies and the resulting social attitudes of migrants may interlock during their stay, but they also evolve. Sometimes the transition from an autotelic strategy to an instrumental one is a defence against failure during initiation of social contacts. In other cases, that defence may take form of glorification of their own culture, although this attitude requires a lot of energy and courage to face potential conflict/awkward situations in the receiving society. During the stay, the personal hierarchy of adaptation problems also changes (in the case of foreign students, mostly during their first and subsequent years of study; see Nowicka 1993: 31).

Choice of adaptive strategy depends on many factors. For example, in 1974, John Goldlust and Anthony H. Richmond introduced the ‘multivariate model of immigrant adaptation’, based on the analysis of four processes: acculturation, integration, satisfaction and identification. In each case, they took into account several factors that are typical for the respective process; in the case of satisfaction, for instance, the degree of satisfaction with work, study or staying conditions (Goldlust and Richmond 1974: 196–203). This dimension, as well as integration (measured by the authors on the basis of the frequency and quality of their social contact both intimate, e.g. the family of the migrant, and their wider social environment in the receiving country), seems appropriate for analyzing the adaptation processes of foreign students. Berry, in turn, proposed the division into group and individual (socio-demographic background of each of the migrants, length of migration etc.) factors. The former are connected with three
environments: 1) migrant’s country of origin (scale of cultural distance), 2) the host country (policy and social attitudes towards migrants, availability of job market), 3) own group of migrants staying in the host country (characteristic of immigrant community) (Berry 1997: 15). In the Polish context and in relation to foreign students, Sławomir Łodziński indicated four groups of factors influencing adaptation processes of foreign students: 1) cultural (scale of differences between the two cultures and the readiness to leave former cultural patterns), 2) social (the quality and intensity of contacts with representatives of the new culture, and also within the group of foreign students, where bonds similar to those left in the country of origin may be created), 3) individual (personal characteristics such as age, sex, social background, education, motivation and the level of self-awareness) and 4) administrative (the system for recruiting foreigners for studying in Poland and the conditions offered to them) (Łodziński 1993: 93–100). Relating to the transnational context, the analysis of migrant adaptation should include the basic feature of this paradigm, that is the trilateral character of the occurring relations and interactions. The adaptation should be analyzed taking into account the processes between migrant, host country and the country of origin, including both the context of everyday life, personal identity, politics and also economics (Łukasiewicz 2010: 195).

FOREIGN STUDENTS IN LUBLIN

Lublin is an academic city. The number of students in the academic year 2014/2015 was 71,271, of which foreigners accounted for 6.3%. In the context of more general, nationwide data, this ratio is higher than average – the average proportion of the number of international students to the total number of students in Poland in 2014/2015 was 3.14% (Siwińska 2015; Dymek 2015). The number of foreigners studying in Lublin has been steadily growing in recent years. This is connected with the process of the internationalization of Polish universities as well as with the international situation. What is particularly visible is the inflow of students from Ukraine that is clearly higher in the last two years and is connected with the war in the eastern part of Ukraine. Figure 1 below presents collective data from the ‘Study in Poland’ programme and shows the increase in the number of foreign students in Lublin over the last five years.

There are nine higher education establishments in Lublin: both public and private (according to data for 2014/2015, there were 434 higher education institutions in Poland, including 236 private ones). In 2014/2015, the largest number (1131) of foreign students studied at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University. The Medical University, with 1090 foreign students, ranked first among all higher medical schools in Poland in terms of the number of foreign students. Both universities were listed in the national ‘top ten’ list of Polish higher education institutions with largest number of foreign students (7th and 8th places, respectively). Although the Ukrainian nationality is predominant, the ethnic diversity is large. Students representing over 90 nationalities studied in Lublin in the academic year 2014/2015. Table 1 presents the number of foreign students in Lublin according to their place of study and nationality. After the Ukrainians, the strongest representation of nationalities is that of: Taiwanese, Belarusians, Americans, Saudi Arabians and Norwegians.
New tools for adaptation or rooting? Use of ICT by educational migrants...

![Growth dynamics of the number of foreign students in Lublin 2010–2015](image)

**Fig. 1.** Growth dynamics of the number of foreign students in Lublin 2010–2015


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<th>Acronym of the institution name</th>
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**Table 1.** Number of foreign students in Lublin in 2014/2015 (data from the Central Statistical Office of Poland – GUS)
Table 1. cd.

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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>129</td>
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UMCS – Maria Curie-Skłodowska University; UM – Medical University in Lublin; WSP – Vincent Pol University in Lublin; KUL – The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin; WSEI – University of Economics and Innovation in Lublin, PL – Lublin University of Technology; WSPA – College of Enterprise and Administration in Lublin; UP – University of Life Sciences in Lublin; WSNS – College of Social Sciences in Lublin.

Source: Siwińska 2015.

METHODS AND RESEARCH

The aim of the research was to collect a broad spectrum of information about the use of modern technologies by foreign students in their everyday life in two contexts: communication and education. Gathering that information, as well as the general analysis of the dynamics of the interviews was aimed at the future preparation of the main, quantitative survey. The
information gathered during the interview allowed us to briefly reflect on the approach to the use of ICT by foreign students. Special attention was paid to the phenomenon of the transmission of cultural patterns during the everyday practice of the use of ICT by respondents.

The essence of the survey was, thus, a reconnaissance – a further development of the research concept: testing the adopted theoretical convention, revising the planned range of data collected, analysis of the proposed nominal categories and also the language used. Some of the questions of the partially structured questionnaire form for the in-depth interview, designed as basic questions for further quantitative research, were also tested (Sztabiński 2005: 56; Grzeszkiewicz-Radulska 2012: 116–121). What was treated as ‘piloting’ was the part referring to adaptation. It was decided to check which words the foreigners used to describe their situation in this context and what issues they listed. Describing and explaining phenomena, attitudes and behaviours from the perspective of real social actors is crucial for the grounded theory which we accepted (Glaser and Strauss 1995) and the interpretative paradigm that opts for the conduct of quality research to better understand the opinions, impressions and experiences of the studied subjects. Within the planned research this is of particular importance due to the participation of representatives of different cultures. The reconnaissance research also sought to verify the relevance of the research questions outlined in the concept. These were the following:

1. How are ICT tools used (purpose, frequency) by foreign students studying at universities in Lublin?
2. What differentiates the use of the ICT tools, depending on the culture of respondents (link with their nationality as well as an additional feature: the issue of (not) having Polish roots)?
3. Is there a relationship between the method of using the ICT tools and the organizational models in which foreign students operate?
4. Is there a relationship between the method of using the ICT tools and the degree of adaptation to the new environment in the migration situation? And what is the best approach to measure the adaptation of this group?
5. What does the process of transmission of the cultural patterns (transfer of already existing, adoption of new ones) look like in the case of computer mediated communication?

The research included students who were staying in Lublin for at least one semester. This is the shortest possible duration of stay that gives a clear picture of the problems faced by students, both on the level of social relationships and the more ‘functional’ problems – search for accommodation, getting to know the neighbourhood, contacts with educational institution. What is frequently indicated in the process approach to adaptation is that its first phase, including the most difficult and most dynamic time of adapting to the new environment, can take from several weeks to several months, and after that period the process stabilizes (Berry 1997: 13). It should be noted that students on the Erasmus Programme were excluded from the research. Their motivation for study abroad is quite different from that of the students who came here for a full course/foundation year (so-called ‘zero year’) and thus their approach to adaptation is also different.

Persons who differed in terms of numerous characteristics were invited to the reconnaissance interviews. Finally, the research group included representatives of four types of courses...
Karolina Podgórska

(‘zero year’, BA, MA and PhD courses), studying at five higher education establishments. The least differentiated is the distribution of nationalities, with Ukrainians forming the majority (six of the eight respondents; two other participants were from Syria and France) of the interviewees; thus, the cultural differentiation of the group is weak. Eight in-depth interviews were conducted on the basis of a partially structured interview scenario. Obviously, this small number of respondents does not permit us to draw far-reaching conclusions. Still, it grants insight into the research situation, allowing us to form conclusions on the quality and relevance of the adopted research questions.

The interviews were conducted in Polish and English (all students from Ukraine expressed their wish to speak Polish). Each of the interviews took approximately one hour, and they were all conducted in Spring of 2015. The questionnaires were divided into four parts. The first concerned the general use of new technologies by students in terms of its purpose, intensity and proficiency. The second was devoted to the devices they were using during their stay for educational purposes and for communication. The third pertained to the online and offline tools utilized during their study. The respondents were presented with a standardized list of tools and were asked to indicate the frequency of their use and the degree of their engagement in that use (passive/active user). Then, the respective tools were discussed in educational and communicational contexts. In the final section, the aim was the grouping of answers into categories of: contact with Poles in Lublin, with their compatriots in Lublin/Poland, with compatriots in their country of origin, and possibly with other friends in the international environment. Respondents also replied to questions about their activity on social network sites. They were asked to react to the statement saying that ‘new technologies influence the preservation/enhancement/creation of new social relationships.’ The last part of interview was devoted to adaptation. The respondents were asked to evaluate their social relationships (also on four levels) and to reply to the question about how they would define ‘high quality’ in terms of such relationships. What was also asked for was their knowledge of Polish and other foreign languages, and their language choice when using ICTs. The final questions concerned their satisfaction from staying in Poland and future plans.

SUMMARY OF THE INTERVIEWS

All the interviewed foreign students were very intensively using ICTs. The moment of their arrival for study was the moment the majority of them intensified their use of ICTs – they bought/received their first private laptop computers, and already here, after some time, bought better phones.

I got my first laptop as a gift from my father, prior to leaving to study. (Female, 21 years old, from Ukraine, UMCS student, MA programme in economics, Polish descent, 5 years in Lublin)

Back then smartphones, Internet were not that popular at all, so I used them less, as I did not even have a smartphone, I didn’t buy my first smartphone until I was in Poland, so it is here that I started to use such technologies, and well when I knew I was going to study I also bought my first laptop, so I had no laptop of my own previously… I relatively rarely used the
Internet, now I am using it much more often. (Male, 22 years old, from Ukraine, KUL student, MA programme in European studies, Polish descent, 6 years in Lublin)

The question arises: if the region of origin and the connected economic questions may be of some importance (Godlewska 2004: 26). It was the respondents from the East¹ who spoke of buying computer equipment only after arriving to study in Poland and this underlined the low level of digitalization and ICT fluency in their countries of origin.

Well, much more now, as I have to communicate more with my parents. When I was back home everyone was simply there – mom, dad, all are there, and now only with such devices, and it is also more used to study, it’s not so developed in Ukraine, in Ukraine I was simply using some library, there... well, I rarely used computer devices... (Female, 17 years old, from Ukraine, UMCS student, ‘zero year,’ Polish descent, 6 months in Lublin)

There was no access to remote courses, to e-learning at school. No, there was no such thing at all... It was strange for me how normal it was for you here. (Female, 19 years old, from Ukraine, WSEI student, BA programme in computer science, 3 years in Lublin)

The interview itself was a moment for self-reflection on their own attitude towards new technologies. Some of respondents realized, in the middle of their interviews, the degree of intensity and purpose of use of technologies.

Wherever you go there is WiFi connectivity, so it is more present in my life, but it is not an addiction yet, you can’t be addicted when you have to study. (Female, 21 years old, from France, UM student of medicine, 2 years in Lublin)

I feel addicted, also because of my work [professional – the respondent is working in an office – KP] (Female, 21 years old, from Ukraine, UMCS student, MA programme in economics, Polish descent, 5 years in Lublin)

Most frequently used for communication were social networks (for communication with friends) and instant messaging platforms (communication with family). This makes the communication synchronous in its character. Asynchronous communication, in the form of e.g. sending e-mails, was very rare and was used for formal contacts. Use of a mobile phone in its classic function (telephonic conversation) is residual (apart from professional contexts). Among respondents from the East, different social media were used to contact compatriots (the ‘V Kontakte’ site: vk.com) and to contact Poles and the international community (Facebook).

The level of traditional contacts with Poles is relatively low, and the answers sometimes reveal the paucity of such relations (apart from those persons who started permanent work during their study – three respondents). CMC with Poles is also of low intensiveness.

Unfortunately I haven’t got many Polish friends, but when there’s someone, I contact them with FB, once a month or so... (Female, 18 years old, from Ukraine, UMCS student, ‘zero year,’ Polish descent, 6 months in Lublin)

¹ In the interviews: the Ukrainians.
I do not communicate with Poles, I only have my roommate and her boyfriend, that’s all. (Female, 17 years old, from Ukraine, UMCS student, ‘zero year,’ Polish descent, 6 months in Lublin)

The interlocutors, although frequently of Polish origin, stay within the circle of their primary culture (still, this situation partially changes after starting work during study), which is supported very intensively (and also of high emotional quality) through virtual contacts with family in their country of origin. The technology itself is associated more with overcoming communication distance, and used for filling the gap in traditional contacts here. However, the respondents do not treat it as parallel to traditional forms of contact.

After arrival the laptop was my best friend, I used it a lot, it replaced the initial lack of real relationships here, allowed me to spend time when there were no friends around. (Female, 21 years old, from Ukraine, UMCS student, MA programme in economics, Polish descent, 5 years in Lublin)

All respondents evaluated their stay in Lublin generally well, still their replies on that topic were rather short.

I think it’s ok. I like the place I live in. I have lived in the same flat ever since my first year, so I’m lucky that I have never had to move. (Female, 21 years old, from France, UM student of medicine, 2 years in Lublin)

Very satisfied. (...) There were only moral difficulties, it was hard in the beginning... but not hard, but rather uneasy to adapt, but only because I left my family and close friends for so long for the first time ever... (Female, 18 years old, from Ukraine, UMCS student, ‘zero year’, Polish descent, 6 months in Lublin)

USE OF ICTS BY FOREIGN STUDENTS
AND THE TRANSMISSION OF CULTURAL PATTERNS

The category of cultural pattern can be used in many context, also in the context of new forms of communication (e.g. CMC) and ICT use in general. People from modern cultures use new technologies in certain ways and it seems an interesting question as to whether important changes in their lives influence this. Migration, also educational migration, established transnational bonds and networks of virtual connections and belongings are often strengthened by ICT (or create thanks to ICT). Taking into account the different cultures of the students’ origins (diversification West-East, having Polish roots or not, European vs. “far” cultures e.g. Arab ones etc.), it can be supposed that their initial digital behaviors differ. All of these meet in another, distinct culture (e.g. Polish) where they transmit these differences by giving them a new dimension. ICT use during educational migration is different that than prior to migration in many aspects but at the same time lets the student preserve cultural continuity in the conditions of spatial distance.
The potential ‘different’ use of new technologies after leaving to study can be analyzed in two ways. On the one hand, the students use new technologies differently (more intensively), as this is the result of the educational purpose of their stay and the need to accomplish one of their basic social needs (to stay in touch with family and friends in a situation of spatial distance – a kind of “universal” cultural pattern typical for such an international student milieu). On the other hand, the very fact of ‘leaving home’ to study is an impulse for more intensive use of ICTs, because it is due to that event, frequently in the form of a gift, that the students acquire the devices required to develop sufficient literacy in their ‘network’ activities. New technologies thus automatically become their daily routine.

Also, the choice of cultural patterns with the use of ICTs by foreign students can be discussed in two contexts. The first concerns the aim of the use of ICTs. The other – an aspect of the former, that is the communicative use of ICTs. The interviews show that prior to migration the respondents mainly used new technologies to contact friends, and to a limited extent only – to study. In the case of respondents from the East this could be the result of the lack of popularization of ICTs in their educational systems, and also problems with hardware (poor economic situation of the family). The student from Syria (Male, 39 years old, KUL PhD student in Philosophy, 2 years in Lublin) indicated problems with electricity caused by military actions. The student from France (Female, 21 years old, UM student, MA programme in medical studies, 3 years in Lublin) indicated a ‘lack of such a need’. In general, individual replies oscillated around the notion that little has changed in comparison to their situation prior to leaving. However, all respondents admitted that what had mostly changed was their intensity of ICT use. After their arrival the educational context of ICT use was also strongly stressed; still, communication remained unchallenged as the primary function of ICTs.

The changes in ICT use among the respondents in terms of communication seem deeper. Communication with broadly understood friends was replaced by communication with persons from the closer social circle, mostly family members. Communication with them is very intensive, and almost in all cases occurs every day (with a minimum of several times a week). It is most of all synchronous communication, but it is not with the mediation of the phone, but rather with commonly accessible instant communication applications; typically, Viber, WhatsApp and Skype. One more interesting observation: the evaluation of the quality of those contacts was high among the respondents. Respondents from the East stressed on multiple occasions that the social relations, e.g. with their parents, through use of online media, had improved, were more valued, they were more aware of them (see also Horst and Miller 2006).

The relations with my parents became better, as we started to treat each other a bit differently, different relations... They became better, because I began to value my parents more... (Female, 17 years old, from Ukraine, UMCS student, ‘zero year,’ Polish descent, 6 months in Lublin)

Of course the small research group does not allow us to estimate whether this is typical only for persons coming from the East, but we may adopt such a hypothesis while designing future research.
Migration triggers changes in the ways of using new technologies: they are partially obvious (need to facilitate contacts with family and friends left in the country of origin), and partially surprising – as the subjective feeling of better relationships with families, based solely on online contact. At the same time, the interviews suggest that contacts with friends remaining in the country of origin lose some of their intensiveness, even with a broad use of both instant messaging tools and social networks. However, the evidence of the transfer of previous cultural patterns becomes apparent: that is, the use of a separate social network (vk.com) by students from the East to start and support contacts with their compatriots.

Will and if yes – how – these patterns of use of new technologies, changing in situation of migration, influence the adaptation processes of foreign students? This frame research allowed us to outline an idea that may become the starting point for an in-depth analysis of that field. All respondents evaluated the quality of their lives during their study in Lublin in a very positive way. They are satisfied with their accommodation, the general social relationships in place, although several persons voluntarily reported some discriminative behaviours that they had encountered both in the context of the university and the broadly understood contacts with Poles. At the same time, the intensity and – in many cases – subjectively experienced quality of the remote, synchronous contacts with their families increased. Maybe the following hypothesis should be verified in future research: more intensive communication with their homes produces a feeling of ‘being at home’ in Poland, and from the psychological viewpoint gives the students some support and a stable social background for the duration of their study (see also: Bilas-Henne and Boski 2014: 192).

Adaptation of students has, thus, every chance to develop well, if we are to analyze it in the context of their wellbeing, that is largely influenced by intensive virtual contacts with their families that are available at any time. This transnational transfer of support allows young people to feel at home in their new place. Still, it may form an obstacle to starting new social relationships in Poland. The respondents were very cautious in their reports on those, or rather their lack2 and they seemed to recognize this area as a failure. In this context, the new technologies were perceived by respondents as neutral – having no impact on starting new or supporting (non-)existing relations with Poles in a significant way. The situation changes visibly once the student starts working in Poland – then, ICTs support and strengthen, through professional contacts, relations with Poles. Still, however, in this context ICTs seem not to support starting new relationships. Thus, on the basis of the interviews no relationship was observed between use of ICTs and deepening the adaptation process in its socio-cultural meaning. Still, a thesis or rather a kind of intuition is outlined, stating new technologies support psychological adaptation. In the case of such young people, it could be based on contacts with home, a peculiar ‘return to roots’ or, in other words, a strengthening of the pattern of “mental contact” transmitted from home.

2 There are many reasons for this problem. The respondents mentioned both the lack of sufficient skills in Polish, individual personality traits that influenced the lack of need for new social contacts, or the planned actions of university officials, that introduced national ‘segregation’ in dormitories, causing the foreign students to stay in their own environment.
CLOSING REMARKS – INDICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The questions of adaptation, although well researched, elude simple evaluations in the case of temporary student migrations. The attempt to set a sensible list of adaptation factors on the basis of ‘direct’ statements and indirect questions did not bring about the expected results – which can be attributed to the frame character of the research (small and not specific sample size). However, the interviews outline an interesting perspective: all respondents from the East stress they do not plan to return to their homeland, and yet are not building a network of relationships with Poles here, concentrating their energy mostly on virtual, intensive communication with families in their countries of origin.

Construction of a questionnaire that would separately test the degree of psychological and socio-cultural adaptations would form an interesting procedure in the field of research on the adaptation of foreign students in the context of ICT use. What is also worth consideration is the introduction of the construct of so-called academic adaptation, as suggested by Cemalcilar, Falbo and Stapleton (2005: 94). This is understood as the result of successful psychological and socio-cultural adaptation that is characteristic for students due to the educational purpose of their stay.

Based on our reconnaissance research it seems justified to develop, in future studies, the concept of cultural differentiation in modes of ICT use. Quantitative research on the basis of a verified and simplified questionnaire, with the participation of a significantly larger research group chosen according to keys of their cultural affiliation, would allow us to verify that thesis. Little can be said on the basis of our interviews about the influence of the organizational system that the students function in at their respective schools on the level of their adaptation. Still, the differentiation of the way the ‘student-customer’ is treated, depending on the strategy adopted by the university for a set ‘type’ of student, allows us to suppose that future research on this aspect could bring interesting results.

Construction of a questionnaire such that it would contain retrospective questions pertaining to situations prior to leaving to study and the previous use of new technologies by foreign students also seems a good idea to follow. It is also well worth verifying the questionnaire form for a stricter division of issues related to education and communication which would allow us to order the gathered data.

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TRANSMISSION OF CULTURAL PATTERNS AMONG YOUNG KURDISH MIGRANTS IN ISTANBUL

The purpose of this paper is to analyze phenomena connected with the transmission of cultural patterns between Turkey’s South-Eastern (‘Kurdish’) region, called ‘Northern Kurdistan’ by the Kurds, and Istanbul. The chapter also includes remarks on transmission between the communities of young Kurdish migrants and the host society of the multicultural metropolis, of which more than 80% are migrants born outside Istanbul (see: Akaraca and Tansel 2014). I will present partial results of an ongoing research project concerning the social construction of ethnic identity among young Kurds internally migrating to the country’s capital city from other parts of Turkey. In the first part of the chapter some general information is provided concerning Kurdish culture and the region perceived by them as their homeland. I will also describe the specific nature of the city of Istanbul seen from internal migration in Turkey and then provide a brief history of relations between the Turkish state and the Kurds. In the following parts, the Relative Acculturation Extended Model and Antonina Kłoskowska’s theory of culturalization are cited as theoretical frameworks for the subsequent analysis. The last paragraphs are devoted to examples of ways of cultural transmission among young Kurdish migrants in Istanbul.

KURDS, KURDISTAN AND ISTANBUL

Kurds are often considered one of the largest ethnic groups in the Middle East and one of the biggest in the world without a sovereign state (see e.g.: Roy 2011). Kurdistan, as a geographical and cultural region, is in the Kurds’ view their homeland and the location for their intended autonomy or independent self-rule. It’s name and borders remain highly controversial, especially among officials of the four countries within which borders the region lies – Turkey to the North, Iraq to the South, Syria to the East and Iran to the West. Nonetheless, the political empowerment and eventual unification of these four parts belongs to the greatest
Kurdish dreams and is perceived as a necessary step in the preservation of their culture and their very existence, as throughout the years they have been subject to political and cultural oppression (see: McDowall 2005). Traditional Kurdish social organization revolves around a semi-nomadic way of life with taking care of the flock and land cultivation as the main occupations and strong kinship ties and the prevalence of oral tradition. Collective celebrations are important. Kurds from all of the parts of Kurdistan feel cultural and historical affinity, even if the group is heterogeneous in terms of language and religion. The northern (‘Turkish’) part of the Kurdistan is the largest. Estimations of the Kurdish populations in the first decade of 21st century vary between 14 and 20 million (CIA 2008; Sirkeci 2006).¹

This article concentrates on Kurds living in Turkey, and in particular the most visible group, the leftists². It is important to note there is no single Kurdish identity. The political environment of the cultivation of Kurdish culture was and continues to be different in each of the four countries. Given this difference, the analysis was limited to those Kurds migrating from other parts of Turkey to Istanbul. The ideology of the Turkish state is based on specifically nationalistic premises (often called Kemalism, after the Republic’s founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk; see: Yavuz 2003: 31) and this has for many years sought to erase Kurdish identity (e.g. by calling them the mountain Turks) and thus can be treated as a ‘predatory identity’ in Arjun Appadurai’s (2006: 51–59) sense. In contemporary social sciences it is often stressed that identity is not a fixed set of traits invariably transmitted through socialization, but rather a product of social construction through contextual self-reference created within one’s social circumstances. In the case of Kurdish Studies, such an approach was proposed by Murat Somer (2002).

¹ Turkish and global Kurdish populations are hard to estimate. Resettlement policies, assimilation processes and previously existing bans on researching ethnic differences have contributed to the impossibility of more accurate demographic calculations. In Turkey, the most available indicator of ethnicity can be information on language collected in censuses held until 2000. Some scholars note, however, that this is a misleading indicator, as a growing number of Kurds from younger generations (among others due to their education undertaken in Turkish) do not speak Kurdish (see: Zeyneloğlu, Sirkeci and Civelek 2015). Some estimations from the first decade of the 21st century imply that there are 30–38 million Kurds worldwide and 12–20 million live in Turkey (see: Yıldız 2005: 6). Calculations of the Kurdish population in Istanbul estimate their number to be between 2 and 4 million (see: Ağırdr 2008). Judging by these estimations and the geographical proportion of Turkish Kurdistan relative to its other parts, it can be inferred that Turkish Kurds represent half of the world’s Kurdish population. Estimations from the same time period point to: from 8 to 10 million Kurds living in Iran, from 4.5 to 5 million in Iraq and from one to one and a half million in Syria (see: Lalik 2008: 27).

² For years open identification as a Kurd was connected with political affiliation to Kurdish nationalism and a leftist point of view. There are, however, numerous Kurds who are conservative Muslims. This was visible for a long time in strong support for the Muslim democratic Justice and Development Party. Many of them would not underline their ethnic identity as the religious one is perceived as more important, others treat Kurdishness as a purely cultural and not political identity and would be less inclined to underline it and participate in research on topics such as the one presented in the chapter. However there are movements which underline both the role of Islam and Kurdish heritage, such as academic circles around the journal and publishing house – Nûbihar. It is also important to note that despite political, linguistic and economic differences among Kurds in Istanbul, their perception of discrimination and persecution of Kurdish language and culture is to a large extent similar (see: O’Connor 2016: 160; Ahmetbeyzade 2007). Even the very conservative Free Cause Party (Turkish acronym: Hûda-Par), which is often associated with the so-called Turkish or Kurdish Hizbullah, has a program of bringing Kurdish language to the public sphere and promoting its teaching.
Kurds speak different languages (which are often considered as ‘dialects’ of Kurdish), dominant being: Kurmanci, Sorani, Zazaki (or Dimlki) and Hewrami (or Gorani) (see: Kreyenbroek 2000). Furthermore, the Kurds are believers of various religions: Sunni and Alevi Islam, Yezidim and Ahl al Haqq (see: Kreyenbroek 2000). The majority of Kurds in Turkey speak Kurmanci and are adherents of Sunni Islam, but in the country there are also Kurds who speak Zazaki and are Alevis.

Since the 2000s, Istanbul has been called the ‘biggest Kurdish city’ as it has been a place of intensive migration connected with economic deprivation and the prevalence of an environment of insecurity in mainly Kurdish inhabited South-Eastern Turkey (see: TimeTurk 2010). Moreover, it is an important city for Kurdish culture, as the first Kurdish political and cultural organizations were formed here at the beginning of 20th century (see: Alakom 1998). The total population of Istanbul exceeds 14 million. It is a commercial centre as it hosts headquarters and central offices of national and international corporations, but it is also characterized by visible economic inequalities (see: Karpat 2004; Ciplak 2012). Migration waves in the Republic of Turkey can be divided into three. The first was stimulated by the country’s industrialization of the 1960s and 1970s. The second took place in the 1980s and 1990s. In contrast to the first wave, this was mainly driven by expulsion due to military conflict between the Marxist-Leninist Kurdistan Workers’ Party (Kurdish abbreviation – PKK) and the government of the Republic (see: Çelik 2005). During the 1990s, several villages in South-Eastern Turkey (Northern Kurdistan) were razed by the Turkish army and the PKK (see: Jongerden 2007: 79–81). Therefore, many Kurds were forced to leave their regions and move within the country. Since the government of Turkey suspended the policy of expulsion in the South-East at the beginning of the 21st century, one can define the third wave of migration as relatively more voluntary – yet, migration rates are still increasing (see: Kaczorowski 2014). By 2011, immigration to western and south-western provinces increased: 84% of Istanbul residents were migrants, and 39% of Turkish citizens were internal migrants. This proportion was three times as high as that in 1950 (12%) (Akaraca and Tansel 2014).

**BRIEF HISTORY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TURKISH STATE AND THE KURDS**

Contemporary Kurdish activists and scholars, while describing the situation of Kurds in Turkey, highlight the contrast between the nationalistic Turkish Republic and the multi-ethnic pluralistic Ottoman Empire when lands inhabited by the Kurds had benefited from quasi-autonomy under the rule of princes – mirs. Relations between these principalities and the state have been compared to vassal obligations in medieval Europe (see: Marescot 2007: 57, Bocheńska 2011: 96–98).

Although some Kurdish groups initially supported Atatürk’s political movement and many of them even fought between 1919 and 1923 in the Turkish War of Independence (in Turkish: Kurtuluş savaşı), the Turkish Republic was proclaimed as a nation-state with ethnically-homogenous citizens. Gradually, it began to be evident that not only were the Kurds supposed to integrate themselves to the dominant Turkish culture but eventually their
distinctive customs and traditions would be denied when authorities assigned them the identity of the ‘mountain Turks’ (see: Özcan 2006: 69–71). Kurdish attempts to gain autonomy and independence resulted in various uprisings that were bloodily suppressed. Most notable were Sheikh Said’s uprising (1925), the Ararat rebellion (1925) and the Dersim rebellion (1937–1938) (see: Bruinessen 1994). The relative opening of the Turkish political sphere in the 1960s led to the involvement of many Kurdish activists in the leftist Workers’ Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi) (see: Özcan 2006: 41; Romano 2006: 46–47).

Following the coup of 1980, the Kurdish left was monopolized by the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) – a Marxist-Leninist organization which started an armed struggle with the Turkish state in 1984. After his capture in 1999, the PKK’s leader – Abdullah Öcalan, inspired by an American philosopher Murray Bookchin, changed his policy and advocated for autonomy of the Kurdish people and the general democratization of the whole of Turkey. Since the 1990s, the Kurdish left has been represented on the political stage (also in Parliament and local posts) (see: Marescot 2007: 83).

The first decade of the 21st century was considered by many commentators as a time of democratization in Turkey. During those years, the situation of Kurds in Turkey seemed to be changing radically, owing to sweeping reforms undertaken by the ruling Justice and Development Party (Turkish abbreviation AKP). After gaining power in 2002, the party announced accession to European Union (EU) as its primary goal (see: Balci 2013). Some reforms were also made with the intention of increasing gender and ethnic equality. Reforms allowed for broadcasts in the Kurdish language and in 2009 TRT 6 – the first public TV channel in the Kurdish language was formed. In late 2012 (then prime minister) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced the Resolution Process aimed at ending the military struggle with the outlawed PKK through peaceful dialogue and reforms. In 2015, both Turkish and Kurdish opinions had high hopes on the results of June elections (in which for the first time – a pro-Kurdish party HDP passed the 10% threshold). These hopes, however, turned to dust in late July when the government announced Turkey’s war on terror, officially aimed against both ISIS and the PKK, but with a significant focus on bombing and arresting people associated with the Kurdish left.

CULTURAL PRACTICES AS A WAY OF MAINTAINING IDENTITY – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Construction of the cultural identity of migrants and receiving groups is interconnected with transmission of cultural patterns. It usually involves partial maintenance of heritage culture and adapting to some norms and values of the host society. Since Frederik Barth’s (1969) famous text, the social sciences have focused on the analysis of boundaries between ethnic and – more generally – social groups. Contemporary approaches to studying ethnic and cultural identity often treat it as affected by the interests of groups and the possibilities to address these interests. It is pointed out that this process is not fixed, as it depends on social context and on which strategies are perceived by the group as effective in a given situation. Scholars such as Stuart Hall (1996) and Rogers Brubaker (2004) analyze ethnicity as a discursive categorization that can be invoked based on the aims and structural limitations.
Antonina Kłoskowska (2001, [1996]) stressed the significance of studying individual ways of the usage of elements of the cultural syntagma (understood as national cultural structure). The dominant factor shaping this usage is, for her, the process of culturalization. The fundamental role during this process is attributed to peer groups and influential people who act as gate-keepers of contact with culture. They stimulate the individual’s contact with the cultural content (such as beliefs, ideologies, art) and, as a result, these encounters shape one’s cultural identity (see: Kłoskowska 1996: 109). Applying these suggestions to the topic of cultural transmission, I would argue that it is dependent on practices which may have individual character, but which are influenced by certain collective social actors (e.g. political and cultural elites). Culturalization of Kurds in Turkey, and specifically those migrating internally, can be treated as having particular structural limitations due to the long-lasting ban on the Kurdish language and the nationalistic ideology of the state. Transmission of cultural norms in regards to migration can also be analyzed as a vital part of acculturation processes. In the 1970s, a psychological approach began to dominate studies on acculturation, owing to the development of the Acculturation Model by John W. Berry and his associates (see: Berry, Kim, Power, Young and Bujaki 1989). The model proposed to study the acculturation attitudes connected with preservation of identity and relations with the host society, modifications of practices and living conditions, along with emotional and psychological difficulties associated with these phenomena. Subsequent studies on acculturation elaborated on Berry’s model and expanded it in order to include additional factors and dimensions. The Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM) developed by Marisol Navas and her associates is one such recent example of new approaches to acculturation. These scholars (2005) included the following factors in their analysis: the acculturation attitudes of both host and migrant groups, psychosocial variables influencing them and additional behaviour indicators (such as participation in organizations, linguistic practices, use of media). Inspired by Javier Leunda (1997), RAEM initiators proposed the consideration of seven domains: politics and government (understood broadly as power relations), work (understood as more material aspects of labour such as tools, conditions and schedules), economic (concerning exchange transactions, consumer habits and ways of financial management), family relations (connected with marital customs, kinship relations and parenthood), social relations (involving contacts with people outside of the family, most notably friends), ways of thinking (including principles and values) and religious beliefs and customs (see: Navas et al. 2005: 26–29).

The RAEM addresses the discrepancies in expectations and real possibilities of maintaining identity and acculturation, while taking into consideration different strategies and elements of cultural identity that can be fulfilled in different social domains. Thus, acculturation as cultural identity is treated as socially constructed, selective and relative. Analyzing various social contexts (see e.g.: Navas et al. 2007; Leunda 1996), the RAEM scholars noted that discontent between migrant and host groups will be easier to resolve if they concern concrete rather than symbolic domains. The RAEM was designed for quantitative research using psychological scales (see: Navas et al. 2005: 29–30), but it can also be treated as a general approach for qualitative studies.

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3 Culturalization is understood by Kłoskowska as a process resembling socialization, but with an emphasis on the development of the cultural identity in the course of the individual’s life.
Theoretical framework when analyzing the phenomena of acculturation.4 Such a framework allows cultural transmission to be addressed in different social domains and the inclusion of the reception of migrants by the host culture.

The results presented here mainly concern cultural transmission from Turkey’s Southeast (Northern Kurdistan) to Istanbul. Preservation and reconstruction of cultural identity through culturalization – studied among young Kurdish migrants in Istanbul – is also an important part of horizontal (intergenerational within a family), vertical (between peers – in this case Kurds in Istanbul of different geographical origin) and oblique cultural transmission (from older generations outside the family) (see: Berry et al. 2002: 20). While cultural transmission is in some conceptualizations distinguished from acculturation as a perpetuation of customs, values and traditions within a primary culture (Berry et al. 2002: 20–21), it can be argued that the process is always connected with reference (and contact) to other cultures. Ways of preserving Kurdish identity, therefore, form an important part of both acculturation to Istanbulian society (consisting in the main part of migrants) and cultural transmission of Kurdishness. Moreover, these ways (including their institutional and private aspects) are strongly affected by their social and political surroundings, including the dominant Turkish culture. In this understanding, transmission of cultural patterns is connected with both acculturation and cultural transmission, and culturalization serves as an important dimension. As cultural patterns, following Ruth Benedict (1934), can be conceptualized as configurations of norms and customs, their transmission concerns: societies of origin, migrants and their ways of construction of cultural identity and a heterogeneous host society. Our findings mostly depict that aspect connected with transmission between societies of origin, young migrants and Kurds from different parts of Turkey’s Southeast living in Istanbul who are affected by the specific socio-political environment of the city. They are, however, supplemented by remarks on transmission between Kurdish and Turkish communities in Istanbul.

WAYS OF CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND TRANSMISSION EMERGING FROM FIELD RESEARCH

The following analysis of the transmission of cultural norms among young Kurdish migrants in Istanbul is based on partial results of 50 in-depth interviews and participatory observations. The research was conducted during two two-month field trips to Istanbul during the summers of 2014 and 2015. The sampling was based on a snowball approach and the availability of the respondents. The interviewees were migrants living in different districts of the city, differing in their level of political activism. Some were college graduates, others – students and factory workers. Most can be described as middle class. Among the graduates, there were young lawyers, high school teachers, physiotherapists, pharmacists

4 In the Polish academic context the RAEM was used, for instance, by Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska (2015) in her study of Syrian refugees in Istanbul.
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and entrepreneurs. A smaller group (that accounts approximately for 20% of the sample) belonged to the working class (e.g., bakers, waiters or workers at a textile factory). Almost all were Sunni Muslim (except for two Alevi women) and Kurmanci dialect speakers (except for three speakers of Zazaki). Their ages ranged between 19 and 38. Most of the respondents were male: only 7 were women. Respondents’ political views were mostly leftist as they often explicitly declared themselves as pro-Kurdish Peoples Democracy Party voters (HDP in Turkish). One respondent described himself as a former AKP voter. The interviews focused on three broad topics: history of migration, social construction of Kurdish identity and attitudes toward Istanbul. The research was conducted in Turkish. Additional interviews were held with representatives of Kurdish cultural organizations and a group interview was held with conservative young Kurdish women living in Istanbul.

Kurdish culture can be preserved by migrants through participation in events and activities organized by Kurdish educational, political and artistic organizations. Istanbul, being the economic and cultural capital of Turkey, offers such possibilities. Almost all of the Kurdish publishing houses in Turkey have their headquarters or distribution centres in the city (e.g., the biggest publishing houses Avesta and Vate Initiative, which was the first to publish literature in the Zazaki language). Moreover, many cultural institutions, such as the Mesopotamia Cultural Centre (in Turkish Mezopotamya Kültür Merkezi, Kurdish: Navenda Çanda Mezopotamya, Turkish abbreviation MKM) were first established in the city and only later opened branches in the South-East. MKM was the first, paving the way for others, as it was officially formed in 1991, after the law forbidding publication in Kurdish was rescinded. Aiming at cultivating Kurdish traditional culture and spreading leftist political ideas, the institution offers courses on: Kurdish music, dance, theatre, film making and language. Additionally, the MKM organizes concerts and promotes musical and artistic oeuvres. Some events are also organized in order to collect financial aid for Kurdish groups in need. In the summer of 2015, MKM organized first public week-long festival of Kurdish culture with two to three events daily.

Kurds living in Istanbul, including the young migrants from the South-East, can attend classes and events prepared by MKM. Its significance also lies in its prestige, as it was the cultural organization most often cited by my respondents, also those who did not participate in any of its initiatives. By offering relatively low cost (as for non-governmental institution) cultural education, MKM also promotes Kurdish cultural heritage among less economically privileged groups. This can be important, especially in the new districts of Istanbul inhabited mainly by working-class migrants where independent but similar institutions have been formed (such as Arzela Cultural Centre in Şirinevler).

The most frequently mentioned event attended by respondents was Newroz – a spring festival celebrated as the beginning of the new year by Kurds on every 21st of March. It commemorates the demise of the mythical tyrant Zuhak who was overthrown by a Kurdish blacksmith – Kawa (a version of a myth similar to the one also present in the Persian epic Shahnameh). The Kurdish celebration involves burning bonfires and performing traditional dances and songs.

5 The occupations of the cited respondents are given after the quotes from them.
I participate in Newroz, every year I participate, this year I went, it was very great, apart from that they celebrate Newroz in the university, apart from school for example in certain places in Istanbul, in certain districts, during the week we celebrate newroz in different places. (Male, around 22 years old, from Şırnak Province, college student)

Another institution popular among my respondents was the Kurdish Institute of Istanbul (in Kurdish: Enstitûya Kurdi Ya Stenbolê, in Turkish: İstanbul Kürt Enstitüsü) which was also established in the 1990s and aims mainly at teaching the Kurdish languages and promoting Kurdish literature. It is a non-governmental foundation, as legal obstacles prevented it from being an academic association. The core of activities organized by the Institute are language courses in three dialects: Kurmanci, Zazaki and Sorani. Apart from this, the organization works on translations and publications. It publishes textbooks for teaching Kurdish, Zend – a journal devoted to the Kurdish language and its heritage, and re-releases novels and poems of traditional Kurdish authors such as Feqiye Teyran. The institution was often referred to by the respondents as providing an opportunity to learn grammar and standards of writing in Kurdish. They often pointed out that, although they knew the spoken language from their places of origin and could speak in Kurdish with their families, they had not learned the literary language until after migration to Istanbul:

I wanted to write in Kurdish et cetera... so to a certain degree it was up to me, I managed, but there is a thing... so in the city where I was born there was no such thing as an organization in which you could learn Kurdish... of course the family speaks Kurdish, knows it, but has a problem with things like writing in it, so I came... and for example there is the Institute in Istanbul or other organizations, by going there you learn Kurdish. (Male, 24 years old, from Muş Province, college student and journalist)

This phenomenon can be considered within the framework of Kłoskowska’s theory as a secondary culturalization, as it occurs outside of peer groups and in the place of migration.

The Ismail Beşikçi Foundation (in Turkish: İsmail Beşikçi Vakfı) is also an important Kurdish cultural organization formed in Istanbul. It was established by friends (intellectuals and activists associated with the Kurdish left, operating before 1984) of Ismail Beşikçi – a sociologist who, as early as the 1960s, was the first Turkish scholar to publicly raise the problem of Kurds. The foundation aims at the preservation and promotion of works by Beşikçi, along with fostering new initiatives in Kurdish Studies. It runs a library open to the public in its headquarters in the centre of the city, and hosts a radio channel aimed to young people called Yaşam (which in Turkish stands for ‘Life’). It organizes seminars on Kurdish culture and publishes works on the topic.

Respondents also pointed to organizations not concentrating on culture as providing possibilities to maintain the Kurdish identity, such as the pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) and The Human Rights Association (in Turkish: İnsan Hakları Derneği, abbreviation: İHD). The former gives political representation to the Kurdish left and supports other Kurdish organizations, while the latter, formed in the late 1980s in Ankara, was the first legal institution demanding respect for human rights and freedoms for political prisoners. Throughout the years, this organization gave legal help to Kurds arrested on political-related charges or due
to the use of the then outlawed Kurdish language. Many Kurdish and pro-Kurdish lawyers have worked there, such as Osman Baydemir, who later became mayor of Diyarbakir and a prominent HDP politician. The party was the organization most cited Kurdish by respondents and its co-leader Selahattin Demirtaş was, along with Abdullah Öcalan, mentioned most frequently by respondents as a Kurdish person who they support. Positive attitudes toward the HDP leader can be illustrated with a quote from a respondent who migrated from Silopi:

I have respect for our politicians, I love all of them, but I love Selahattin Demirtaş the most, he is a very genuine man, who knows how to speak in a proper way... always telling the truth... doing whatever is needed for his nation... this is how he is. So among politicians I love him most – Selahattin Demirtaş. (Male, 22 years old, from Silopi district, waiter)

Young Kurdish migrants studying in Istanbul can also participate in Kurdish leftist student organizations focusing on political activism, such as the Federation of Democratic Student Organizations (in Turkish: Demokratik Öğrenci Dernekleri Federasyonu, abbreviation: DÖDEF). Another non-cultural organization, but popular among respondents, was The Migrants’ Association for Social Cooperation and Culture (in Turkish: Göç Derneği – Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Kültür Derneği, abbreviation: Göç-Der). It was formed in Istanbul in 1997 in order to help Kurds expelled from the South-East. Currently, it aims at providing support for internally displaced people, Kurdish refugees and spreading knowledge about Kurdish forced migration in Turkey through conducting research and publication of reports on the topic.

Apart from cultural, educational and political organizations, young Kurdish migrants preserve their cultural identity through everyday practices in both private and public spheres. They are recipients of and contributors to media and journals, including those focused on Kurdish culture and society. Among leftist Kurds in Istanbul and including participants of my study, popular are leftist newspapers such as (pro-PKK oriented) Özgür Gündem, Evrensel, Bir Gün, and (more central-leftist) Radikal. While the first as a Kurdish newspaper is widely available in Istanbul, the other three represent Turkish leftist media which regularly publish topics connected with the Kurdish question. Some respondents cited the leftist television channel IMC6.

Cafés and teahouses play an important social role in Turkey. Some demonstrate their ties to the Kurdish culture in their Kurdish names and decorations. The decorations, apart from including yellow, red and green – the colours of the Kurdish flag, often use Zoroastrian and Yezidi themes. Stressing ties with the Zoroastrianism was a strategy of Kurdish elites at the beginning of 20th century in order to point to the Indo-European origin of the Kurds and highlight their difference from the Turks who dominated the country (see: Bruinessen 1995, 1997). Portraits of Kurdish artists, writers and politicians hang on walls. Some of these cafés organize concerts of Kurdish music and sell Kurdish publications. For a long time, the most distinctive trait of such cafés was the serving of kaçak çay – ‘smuggled tea’ – as it was previously smuggled from Arab countries. This tea usually originates from Sri Lanka, as

6 Enlisted media outlets are widely popular among leftists in Turkey, including followers of the Kurdish Movement which for years referred to leftist discourse (see: Güneş 2012). For information on the construction of the Kurds in Turkish press, see: Sezgin and Wall 2005.
opposed to Turkish tea which is cultivated in the Black Sea region. This tea has been treated as a symbol of Kurdish distinctiveness, but recently many cafés, also in touristic districts of Istanbul, with no connections with the Kurdish culture, have started to serve it. This phenomenon is an example of cultural transmission from migrant group to host society. One of my respondents said that some tea houses have Kurdish symbols in their interior decoration (e.g., a portrait of the musician Ahmet Kaya) only for marketing reasons and that they are not ‘real’ Kurdish places. Some of the tea and coffee houses in Istanbul which show some forms of connection with the Kurds (e.g., play Kurdish music) are popular not only among Kurds, but are widely regarded as some of the best places for meeting friends in the city centre. This way Kurdish culture also affects Turks and other ethnic groups living in Istanbul. Kurdish dances in public places have a similar effect as passersby of different nationalities and political backgrounds often join the collective halay dances. Open-air concerts and festivals are visible signs of Kurdish culture and at the same time invitations to get to know it. Turkish leftists often engage in activities of Kurdish student and political organizations, this was visible in the summer of 2014 during protests in support of the defence of Kobane. A notable example of transmission of Kurdish culture was exhibited at that time by the youth of the Kemalist Republican People’s Party (CHP) who on their banner used the slogan – ‘long live the resistance of Kobane’ in Kurmanci. This was the first time that anyone connected with the party underlining its roots in Atatürk’s policy had used the Kurdish language.

Apart from drinking kaçak çay, another example of maintaining ethnic customs through cuisine, cited by another respondent from Şırnak, was eating cheese with herbs made according to a special recipe typical for his province of origin:

I preserve Kurdish customs and traditions, yes, I can mention which customs, for example in our culture in the morning, herby cheese is made for the breakfast, I have personally brought the cheese from Şırnak, I prepare my breakfasts in the morning with the herby cheese. Here there is Turkish tea but I brought myself smuggled tea, smuggled tea gets to Şırnak from Iraq and I drink smuggled tea from Kurdistan, this is also Kurdish culture. I have şal û şepik. şal û şepik is a traditional Kurdish outfit, şalvar, şalvar they call it, I also have şalvar sometimes. I wear it when I have free time. (Male, 19 years old, from Şırnak Province, college student)

He also mentioned the traditional Kurdish loose brown outfit called in Kurdish şal û şepik and the loose trousers – şalvar that are part of it.

Many respondents also admitted to listening to Kurdish music and artists such as Şivan Perwer, Ciwan Haco and Ahmet Kaya. These singers address the harshness of life in Turkey and are connected with the Kurds (as Şivan Perwer and Ciwan Haco sing in Kurdish) and they were for many years outlawed in the country. Cassettes were illegally distributed and treated as symbols of Kurdish resistance toward Turkification. A more traditional form of

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7 In this sense, Turkification is understood as symbolic and physical violence aimed at assimilation. However, this word (in Turkish turkleşme) is also currently used in a different sense with reference to Abdullah Öcalan’s call for the democratization of the whole of Turkey. In that context, it depicts the efforts of Kurdish leftist organizations aimed at presenting Kurdish culture to other citizens of Turkey (e.g., through the opening of cultural institutions in the cities of Western Turkey which have relatively much smaller communities of Kurds than Istanbul or Turkey’s Southeast.
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Kurdish music is connected with the Kurdish bards – *dengbej* – spreading oral tradition by reciting and singing legends and poems. Although this occupation is currently very rare and its practitioners are mostly the elderly living in the South-East, owing to the spread of mass media records of their performance have been shared. Cultural institutions such as *İsmail Beşikçi Vakfı* and MKM offer lectures and courses devoted to the *dengbej* traditions and from time to time organize *dengbej* concerts. Kurdish traditional music is also practiced by young migrants in Istanbul in the form of performing folk dances, which is arguably the most widely visible manifestation of Kurdish culture as they are performed in public spaces (e.g., close to the ferry station serving commuters across the Bosphorus) and passersby are invited to join the often large circles of dancers accompanied by Kurdish music. Although Kurdish traditional dances are similar to others in Anatolia and the Middle East in general, they can be easily distinguished by the singers singing in Kurdish.

Intensive migration to western Turkey in the 1990s and an increase in voluntary migration since the beginning of 21st century has allowed the rise of social and cultural remittances between Istanbul and Turkey’s South-East. Some of my respondents have stressed that they came to the city only to get education and they plan to return ‘back home’ and use their new knowledge in their region of origin. Migrants who had lived relatively longer in Istanbul also stated that their cities and towns of origin have changed since their migration, mostly for the better. One of the symptoms of such change could be the development of high quality higher education (provided e.g., by Artuklu University in Mardin and Dicle University in Diyarbakır). One of my respondents underlined the role of economic remittances: all the time he had been working in Istanbul he had been sending money home. Owing to contacts with working class people from abroad (e.g., Afghans, Arabs) he was able to learn new languages. Economic remittances can be connected with social ones, as patterns and culture of entrepreneurship can be transmitted from the South-East to Istanbul and back again. An example of this process is a vendor selling clams in Hakkari for the first time. This type of street-food is very popular in Istanbul and other western Turkish cities, while it used to be relatively unknown in eastern Anatolia. A video prepared by one of the local televisions about the vendor is quite popular on the YouTube platform. As many Kurdish organizations were first formed in Istanbul, the experience gained while running these organizations in the city could be exploited by new branches opened in the South-East.

Looking at the transmission of Kurdish culture by young migrants from the perspective of the theoretical framework of the RAEM, it can be argued that the domain generating most discontent is politics. The lack of legal recognition of the Kurdish minority and nationalist politics are the most often cited obstacles to maintaining cultural identity. A woman from Bitlis said:

> Every race has good sides and bad sides. But especially as the state policy in relation to Kurdish identity... aims at removing my Kurdish identity, and moreover I am excluded from society, I cling to Kurdish culture. And because I cannot live according to my Kurdishness... being a Kurd is very important and very special. (Female, around 27 years old, from Bitlis Province, law intern and college student)
The state is seen by Kurds as an oppressor forbidding cultivation of culture, which stimulates resistance. The policy of the closure of Kurdish-medium primary schools in the South-East was most often cited as this type of practice by the state. Although these sentiments are mostly directed toward the Turkish state, my respondents also mentioned cases of negative attitudes of Turks toward the Kurdish language and prejudices linked to associating Kurds with terrorism. Interestingly, it is possible to be discriminated against or stigmatized as a terrorist based simply on one’s Kurdish region of origin. Among others, such a case was also raised by one of the respondents of the focus group with conservative women, distancing themselves from the Kurdish left. From the perspective of Turkish society, the Kurds are often perceived as rebellious and not respecting state authority.

In hypotheses put forward by authors of the RAEM, the political domain is considered relatively less conflictive, which may result from the stress on transnational migration by RAEM scholars, as opposed to internal migration, as in the case of the Kurds, who often perceive the Turkish state governing their homelands as an oppressor. In an ideal situation, my respondents would see the Turkish state recognizing the specificity of Kurdish culture with all its practices, spreading egalitarianism among ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. The ideal order of the political domain, for most of my respondents, would also involve some kind of political autonomy for the South-East, perceived as Northern Kurdistan. This matter appears to be the most controversial within Turkish society, where the fear of a dismembering of the country has been ever-present since the treaty of Sèvres (1920).

The respondents were satisfied with educational and economic opportunities provided by Istanbul. They also liked the multiculturalism of the city: owing to their migration they were able to better get to know the members of other cultures and their perspectives. Respondents noted, however, that many Kurds are economically exploited in Istanbul, working long shifts in poor conditions and for low wages. This topic was mentioned among others by a respondent from Mardin: in other Kurdish districts, if you live with Kurds there [...] they are poor... they are oppressed... (Male, from Mardin Province, around 32 years old, business manager). Such a situation is also connected with Kurdish forced migration, as people expelled from the South-East until 2004 lacked social services and public assistance, were often treated by the state as criminals and had to cling to any jobs they could find (see: Çelik 2012; Saraçoğlu 2011: 79–105). In the domain of social interactions, social life in Istanbul is valued by the respondents, as they pointed to cultural opportunities provided by the city and its more socially liberal atmosphere. This can be illustrated by the remark of a respondent from Van:

In our place, in the evening, everybody altogether stops for the call for prayers – ezan – and life ends. Here it’s not like this, in Taksim, in Kadıköy, at night at any hour you can sit with your friends. (Male, around 26 years old, from Van Province, college student)

In reference to cultural norms and values connected to the domain of family, respondents positively valued the Kurdish tradition of having many children. Some of them have, however, highlighted some Kurdish traditions which they perceive as negative and anachronous, such as arranged marriages:
Now it is like... traditional culturalism and things like that have their positive dispositions but there are also negative, perhaps the anachronous, the ones which when you practice you feel that they are anachronous et cetera [...] For example bride-price, a grandfather and grandmother for example want a girl and a boy to marry... you come, father tells you how much money you have to give as the bride-price and things like that, but in recent years with freedom movement’s appreciation for freedom of women and the value put on women’s organizations, this has been undermined and for the last two years completely forbidden. (Male, around 28 years old, from Malazgirt District, college student)

Several times, the respondents have admitted similarities between Turkish and Kurdish culture, customs and religiosity, but have also seen a problem in the imposition of Turkish identity and culture on all citizens in the country. Such a stance can be illustrated by a quote from a representative of the Mesopotamia Cultural Centre (MKM):

Our Kurdish culture is not worse or better than any other culture. As I have said, none of the cultures... for example of some tribe on the border of Africa is worse or better than any other. Because from the perspective of a person, no one is worse or better than another. And this is important for our culture. If you would for example go to some Turkish organization, you would hear how they try to say that you cannot live outside of the Turkish culture, you cannot live like that, you have to adapt [...]. (Male, around 35 years old, from Tatvan District, musician)

CONCLUSION

Transmission of cultural patterns between Turkey’s South-East (often called Northern Kurdistan by Kurds) and Istanbul can be described as specific, due to its history of difficult relations between the Turkish state and the Kurds. Structural limitations have been imposed on Kurdish identity as the result of the nationalistic ideology of the state. The resistance toward treating Kurdish culture as a peripheral version of the Turkish one arguably had a major impact on young Kurdish migrants’ attitudes toward maintaining their cultural identity. Nevertheless, they make use of various ways and social domains in order to construct their Kurdish identity and participate in cultural exchange with the host society. Istanbul, as a centre of migration, has a special significance for Kurds, as it hosts the largest community in the world and was the place of origin of the first modern Kurdish organizations. My respondents have pointed to the city’s advantages in providing economic, cultural and educational possibilities as well as granting a more open atmosphere for social life. Owing to the provision of education in the standardized Kurdish literary language, migrants can experience secondary culturalization in Istanbul. Interviewed migrants, however, noted that the city is also a place of economic exploitation of many Kurds, especially those who were forced to migrate during the military conflict between the state and the PKK in the 1980s and 1990s. Taking the Relative Acculturation Extended Model as a theoretical framework, it is possible to assess the political domain as the one causing most intensive discontent between the Kurds and the Turks. While the former perceive cultivating their culture as forbidden, the latter fear that greater freedoms for Kurds will result in division of the country. Regarding the domain of
family, respondents pointed to the Kurdish tradition of having many children, but some also mentioned some traditions which they perceive as anachronous and do not want to continue, such as arranged marriages.

Patterns of culture established in Turkey’s Southeast (often called Northern Kurdistan by Kurds) are being transferred in both directions between this region and western Turkey (in this case its biggest metropolis Istanbul), owing to the organizational and educational opportunities provided by the city. Based on respondent’s narratives, it can be argued that this transmission has helped in the preservation of Kurdish culture in the country (especially in times when any form of association in reference to Kurdish culture was forbidden in the Southeast). Study participants have also stressed the opportunities in learning about other cultures after migration which has resulted in their being more open to other groups. Contact with other cultural and ethnic groups has also affected Kurdish organizations which have started to highlight multiculturalism as a value, point to the heterogeneity of Kurdish culture and prepare events and initiatives aimed at presenting Kurdish culture to other groups (e.g. Turks in the West) by organizing cultural festivals or opening branches in cities with Turkish majorities. Experiences in leading associations and cultural exchange are also transferred back to Turkey’s Southeast, as exemplified by the opening of many Kurdish organizations first in Istanbul and then in mainly Kurdish inhabited regions. Many Kurdish publishing houses, journals and media outlets print their oeuvres (including textbooks and dictionaries) in Istanbul and distribute them in the country from the city. It can, therefore, be argued that Kurdish culture is also transmitted from Istanbul to the other parts of Turkey (including the Southeast).

Owing to cultural transmission, manifestations of Kurdish culture can be seen in public life of Istanbul. This refers not only to events and political activities organized by Kurds, but also to every-day life, as in the example of Turkish cafés offering kaçak çay and Turkish passersby participating in performances of Kurdish folk dances. Members of host societies or people of other cultures can engage in a wide range of activities provided by Kurdish organizations and cafés. In part as a result of such cultural transmission, Kurdish culture has become publicly visible and cannot easily be decried by nationalists as non-existent and derived only from Turkish heritage.

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