

Migrants in the Cities of Eastern Poland – Settlement Processes and Relations with Intermediary Groups. Conceptualization of the Research Project

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Introduction²

Inspired by an increasing long-term migration to Poland from the former Soviet Union, as well as the classic concept of “chain migration,” not-so-classic (but very relevant) concepts of “parallel societies” and migrants’ “rootedness” and “embeddedness,” we have devised a research project on the settlement processes of the recent immigrants from behind the eastern borders of Poland. The precise subject of the research is the settlement practices of migrants from Ukraine and Belarus, people who have been migrating to three Polish cities: Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów since 2014. We are interested in the role played in these practices by “intermediary groups” which can mediate between migrants and the host society at large. We believe that the discussion about the issue which we are taking under consideration may contribute to the general discourse on global migrations.

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Main goal of the project

The main goal of this research project is the analysis of the settlement practices of Belarusians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars from the perspective of their relations with the intermediary groups they encounter in the cities of eastern Poland. We believe that the intermediary groups in the settlement process include: a) representatives of the dominant group in Polish society – their attitudes, including real practices, b) migrants from Ukraine and Belarus who had come to Poland earlier, after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, c) indigenous national and ethnic minorities³ (representatives of the Ukrainian and Belarusian minorities and Polish Tatars), d) related religious and ethnic groups (Greek Catholics, Orthodox, Muslims), e) important members of groups left behind in the country of origin, e.g. family members who often participate in the migrating decisions and provide various kinds of support). Groups of migrants taken into consideration include those who settled in Poland after 2014 as a result of the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation or following the crisis in eastern Ukraine and those who settled in Poland following the political developments in Belarus connected with the presidential elections of 9 August 2020. Other migrants considered are those who settled in Poland as a result of broadly conceived globalisation processes that brought on a long-term social and economic deterioration in former Soviet Republics combined with rising demand for staff in countries outside the Russian Federation and aging populations, like Poland, that were seeking to close “gaps” in particular sectors of the economy (Brunarska 2013; Dolińska 2017).

The research area has been defined as Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów, partly because these cities are inhabited by numerous representatives of national and ethnic minorities who may be assumed to have created a kind of “domesticated environment” in terms of culture, ethnicity and religion (without going into more detail on the concepts of “culture”, ethnicity” or “religion”). A control group will also be recruited in the three cities investigated.

The project focuses on the three largest cities in the region for another reason as well. This region also has a rich history of ethnic relations and, above all, the current public discourse on this part of Poland and its “Eastern” nature. The most important characteristics have already been presented by Tomasz Zarycki (2014: 175), who wrote that “Eastern Poland is systematically stigmatized as post-Russian, post-Soviet, mentally oriental”. In the public debate, it is precisely the mentality of the region’s inhabitants that is cited as the cause of its “backwardness”. Eastern Poland, which is a reservoir of cheap labour for Warsaw and other metropolises in Poland and Europe (ibid: 175), is also a place where migrants from the former USSR settle. This may represent an interesting phenomenon from the point of view of ethnic studies: the “transfer of oriental

³ In this project, the terms “ethnic” and “national” are used in accordance with the relevant Polish Act: Journal of Laws No. 2005 No. 17 item 141, Act of 6 January 2005 on National and Ethnic Minorities and Regional Languages.

stigma” from the inhabitants of the Eastern Wall to the newcomers from the East, who rank even lower in the symbolic hierarchy of European space (see Zarycki 2013: 256).

In order to avoid the endogeneity effect (confirmation bias) we intend to compare practices of the immigrants taking advantage of the assistance by the intermediary groups with those who have immigrated and settled “on their own”. In our study, they will constitute a kind of control group consisting of migrants who have settled in Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów but have not had real opportunities to establish relations with related intermediary groups (e.g. national and ethnic groups) due to the lack of a wider settlement of their compatriots in this area.

These groups of newcomers do not represent the groups of migrants living in Eastern Poland. Migrants from less obvious sources also live in the Podlaskie, Lubelskie and Podkarpackie voivodeships. In these three voivodeships at the beginning of 2021 there were 2,776 foreigners who have documents confirming their legal stay from such countries as Brazil, Italy, the Philippines, and Croatia, among others. From the point of view of the study, it seems particularly important to include migrants (control group) who simply do not fit into the earlier defined cultural and social character of Eastern Poland created by the discussed intermediary groups. Thus the control group is an important point of reference in our study. It is obvious that it would be difficult to find a group of migrants not affected by any intermediary groups. For this reason, the criteria for defining migrants included in the control group are as follows:

- migrants’ settlement is not a result of chain migration – objective criterion,
- in the areas where they live, there is no existing national or ethnic minority to which they could be members – objective criterion,
- they do not belong to any formal national and ethnic organizations due to the lack of their presence in the research area – objective criterion,
- lack of important intermediary groups in the settlement process in the respondents’ declarations – subjective criterion.

Migrants included in the control group will not be recruited on the basis of a specific national or ethnic background or on the basis of a cultural context. A common category for the respondents from this group will be the lack (from a subjective point of view) of participation of intermediary groups in their settlement processes.

The proposed study, set in one region, is of an exploratory character. Today’s localities belong to global networks and are being produced in social practices involving various kinds of resources (see, e.g., Giddens 2001; Appadurai 2005). Our “social laboratory” can help to understand practices taking place in various borderland areas (as studied, for instance, by the Association for Borderlands Studies) and in many areas of concentrations of migrants.

The main research question is as follows: what are the settlement practices of Belarusians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars in terms of their relations with intermediary groups encountered in cities like Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów? This problem

assumes an analysis of the methods of shaping and course of settlement practices of migrants. It is assumed that the course of these practices is significantly influenced by the relationships of newly arrived migrants with intermediary groups, and their success depends largely on the following factors: a) the internal cultural and social power (including social competencies) of groups of newly arrived migrants; b) the “outside power” of migrants, potentially supported by various groups and institutions in the “sending society” (the country of origin) or from international organizations; c) the cultural, social, economic and political power of a group of compatriots already belonging to the host society and enjoying the privileges of nationality; d) the inside and outside power of groups that are culturally, religiously and ethnically related; e) dispersed as well as institutionalized dynamic attitudes of the dominant group of the receiving society, or rather the different communities that make up them, before, during and as a consequence of migration; f) the first perception in the migrant group and in the intermediary groups about the cultural “closeness” of the groups in contact, in particular between migrants and indigenous minorities.

Crucial concepts

Defined in the above way, the research problem affects the operationalization of several concepts: “settlement”, “embeddedness”, “social anchors”, “intermediary groups”, “power of ethnic groups”, “social (or cultural) competences” and “adaptation”.

“Settlement” is treated here as a continuous and dynamic process taking place in a specific space, time and social environment, leading to permanent or long-term stay. It is culturally, socially, economically and politically conditioned. It depends on various social relations and the possibility of establishing such relations. It is subject to constant (re)negotiation (see, e.g., Granovetter 1985; Ryan 2018; Korinek, Entwisle and Jampaklay 2005).

The category of “settlement” is strongly connected with “embeddedness”, which in its classic form means: social relations that foster “a sense of rootedness and integration in the local environment” (Korinek, Entwisle and Jampaklay 2005: 779). “Embeddedness” as a scholarly category has very often been used to explain the migration processes. Moreover “features of social embeddedness are among the most influential factors for migrant settlement, onward movement and return” (ibid. : 779).

These two categories are strongly involved with the concept of “different embedding” (Ryan 2018) which presents the complex of multi-level connections between the personal/subjective (micro), relational (meso) and structural (macro) dimensions of migrants’ experiences. Louise Ryan suggests that a “differentiated embedding” concept could explain “(...) the dynamic processes through which migrants negotiate attachments and belonging to varied degrees in different social and structural settings” (2018: 235).

“Social anchors” – the main category of social anchoring concept – are the points of reference and support in the context of social relations, providing a person with a sense of relative psychosocial stability – in particular in situations of borderline experience, such as migration. Anchors can be both subjective and objective. The individual can use existing anchors and create completely new ones (Grzymała-Każłowska 2013, 2016; Brzozowska 2018). Achieving stability in its broadest sense is an important factor in making a settlement decision, and various relations with intermediary groups can be an anchor in itself. The concept of social anchoring serves as a kind of “glue”, consolidating issues of adaptation and integration, as well as the issue of the formation of “new” identities in migrant settlement processes – during which identities may be redefined in many ways, even risking a sense of crisis (see Nowak-Dziemianowicz 2016). What is worth mentioning is that the concept of social anchors reflects dynamic changes of interpretation concepts such as assimilation and integration. Initial concepts of assimilation assumed that representatives of minority groups gradually become alike the social majority. Later concepts, such as integration, stressed that adaptation is a two-directional process. Concepts as social anchors is a response to changes within receiving societies which are no longer homogenous when it comes to values or ethnicity (see Andrejuk and Winiarska 2010)

“Intermediary groups” are assumed to be a kind of “battery” of anchors important for migrants and which, due to their internal and external influence, facilitate settlement processes. So, intermediary groups are here taken to be more or less organized and institutionalized social circles with varying inside and outside power, performing different functions (in social, cultural, moral, economic and political terms). Through the intermediary groups, migrants can acquire various social competencies and make use of those they already possess. Participation in groups of this type may stimulate processes related to the redefinition of identity (or possible construction of a hybrid identity), thus facilitating processes related to the settlement of migrants (Zubida et al. 2013). Not all intermediary groups have to perform the function of anchoring migrants in the new social reality, supporting the processes of permanent settlement. In the literature on the subject, it is difficult to find a definition of the term “intermediary group” that would reflect the meaning adopted above. Nevertheless, Bernward Joerges and Detlev Karsten (1975) point out that migrants living on the border of cultures and communities are themselves intermediary groups between the peoples of the countries of immigration and emigration. Mediation consists in receiving and transmitting values and culture in both directions. Similarly, intermediary groups can act as a “link” between the “old” and “new” social reality of migrants.

The concept of “power of ethnic groups” was popularized by Milton Gordon (1975: 103–105). He proposes to distinguish between “inside power” and “outside power.” The first, coming both from the group’s own power and in some cases also from internal allies in the host society, are anchored within its institutional structures. “Outside powers” are all the factors favouring the group that come from outside the

territory inhabited by it, including support or a positive attitude from other sovereign states or international bodies (e.g. the UN, European Union).

“Social competencies” are understood as a body of knowledge relating to interpersonal relations used to understand prevailing social relations and to recognize patterns functioning in the everyday life of a given social group and to create accurate interpretations of behaviour (Kolasińska 2011: 96). A term with a similar semantic range is “cultural competencies” defined as the general knowledge about culture, including the ability to recognize codes, conventions (Siciński 1989: 120) and related processes, as well as the skills resulting from this knowledge. In Pierre Bourdieu’s (2005) theory, cultural competency is an element of “knowledge”, a result of the accumulation of embodied forms of cultural capital.

We understand “adaptation” as a dynamic process which is determined by relationship among others with reference groups (see Winiecka 2016) and as the process of negotiation with someone’s own “self” which could lead migrants to integration and non-integration. It also could take different forms (see Winiecka 2016; Kwok-bun and Plüss 2013). Chan Kwok-bun and Caroline Plüss (2013) say that an adaptation is a plural and ambiguous process, which needs to be explained to identify the causes and effects of long-term migrant adaptation, integration or non-integration. They propose five types of adaptation like:

- migrant conformity through straight-line assimilation,
- migrant ritualism through multidirectional assimilation,
- migrant retreatism through segmented assimilation,
- migrant innovation through transnationalism,
- migrant rebellion through cosmopolitanism,

In view of this project’s research goal (the analysis of settlement practices) and the adopted terminology, the theoretical basis for the analysis of settlement processes will be:

- a) the concept of social anchoring (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013, 2015, 2017),
- b) the concept of differentiated embedding (Ryan 2018),
- c) a model of five ideal typical modes of migrant integration, adaptation and non-integration (Kwok-bun and Plüss 2013) based on Robert K. Merton’s types of adaptations (1938).

All the aforementioned concepts emphasize the flexible dynamics of the migration process, one that is spread over time and based on complex interactions with people and places. On the one hand, these concepts systematize the research strategy and reflect the complexity and multifaceted nature of migration and settlement processes; on the other hand, they leave room for further analyses of the influence of intermediary groups on settlement processes.

Research problem

The issue to be addressed is the role of the inside group power of the newly arrived migrants in their process of settlement, considering social and cultural competences (broadly conceived) affecting this process. Migration is a complex phenomenon; another issue to be resolved concerns identity, including the question of hybrid identity formation – an important aspect of identification with the new social environment (see Cieslik and Verkuyten 2006). In general, many factors can influence settlement practices, integration and adaptation strategies.

Entering a new local community is at the very least a two-sided process that happens in such domains as: the professional, one's neighbourhood, as part of the general public, an individual household (Korinek et al 2005), or within the space represented by existing minority groups. This situation reveals the possibility of negotiating one's personal attachment, belonging and integration with the local environment and the choice one has over specific migration, adaptation (see Winięcka 2016) and, above all, settlement strategies (see Trąbka and Pustułka 2020).

An important role in the settlement process is played by the number and quality of social anchors (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013, 2016, 2017) at work in various areas of the migrant's life. Social anchors have important functions. Because of them, a person can find his or her "place in the world", ground their sense of existence and establish a basis for psychological and social functioning (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2016). So, there is a relationship between the processes of settlement (in its various forms), social anchoring, adaptation, integration, redefinition of identity and, finally, migration strategies. Migrants can adopt, more or less self-consciously and in different areas of everyday life, ways of acting (adaptation strategies) that are based on their social anchors. This in turn leads to different forms of participation in the host society, forms of participation that might be either inclusive or exclusive. The methods of adaptation often reflect the migrants' level of integration with the host society (Kwok-Bun and Plüss 2013) or with other intermediary groups composed of "new" migrants and existing national or religious minorities. So, it is only by means of an analysis of the relationship between settlement practices and a number of accompanying processes – taking into account the potential of intermediary groups and the migrant's own group – that we will be able to properly present an overall picture of migrant settlement practices. It should also be emphasized that it is difficult to determine to what extent migration is permanent. In order to identify and analyse particular settlement practices involving the assistance of the intermediary groups and to estimate the significance of these groups, we need to compare the mobility trajectories of chain migrants with those of the "self-initiated" (see, e.g., Biemann and Andersen 2010) migrants who emigrated and settled in the host society "on their own."

The main research problem and the **main research question** – *What are the settlement practices of Belarusians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars from the perspective*

of their relations with intermediary groups encountered in cities like Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów? – lead to further questions:

1. Are long-term/permanent settlement processes conditioned by the power (cultural, social, political, economic) of intermediary groups? And if so, does the power of intermediary groups – and whose intermediary groups (a/ representatives of the dominant group in society, b/ migrants from Ukraine and Belarus who came to Poland earlier -- after the 1991 collapse of the USSR, c/ functioning in Poland, Ukrainian and Belarusian minorities and Polish Tatars, d/ religiously and ethnically related groups, e/ significant others left behind in the country of origin) represent important social anchors in the settlement processes? The literature on the subject has already highlighted the fact that belonging to real and imagined groups may constitute a social anchor (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013). However, further research and analysis of the power of intermediary groups as social anchors is needed as it seems to be an interesting line of research into processes that lead to developing social anchors, which may in turn further ground migrant settlement. Each of the intermediary groups may have a different impact on creating the quality of life of migrants and their willingness to settle permanently (or long-term). Their causative power in the generally understood social structure may create both inclusive and exclusive processes.

2. What is the role played by the inside power of a group of newly arrived migrants (including their social competencies) in settlement processes and social anchoring in daily life (in professional life, neighbourhood living, in broader society and households)? Settlement processes can be said to take place simultaneously in various social spaces (Korinek, Entwisle and Jampaklay 2005). However, success in one area does not guarantee success in another one (Ryan 2018). So, it is important to find out how mutual support for migrants in diverse areas influences settlement processes and social anchoring. In which areas of migrants' everyday life does the possibility of using social competences (Kolasińska 2011) represent an inside power of the group, thereby strengthening the position of migrants as members of the general public?

3. When do processes involved in creating a hybrid identity during migration support social anchoring and lead to the adoption of adaptation strategies furthering social integration?

The analyses in this point will mainly concern changes taking place in the cultural identity of migrants and identifications in the areas of norms, ideas, customs, values, language and religion as a cultural context of ethnic identity. However, one should note that in today's world of fluid identifications, the importance of identity roles is increasing. Social actors more and more describe themselves in terms of their social position and roles (see, e.g., Burke and Stets 2009). Migration often leads to a redefinition of the individuals' place in the social structures – both with respect to their new place of residence and their former residence. Subjective assessments of one's place in social structures and evaluations in terms of social upward and

downward mobility (comparing to the situation before migration) seems to be an important factor influencing the adaptation and anchoring of an individual in a new social context (see, e.g., Trąbka and Pustułka 2019). The factors under consideration, related to redefinition of identity during migration, include skills related to maintaining the consistency of one's identity – so-called integration practices. These are steps that integrate thinking and action and which involve the use of cognitive and interpretative strategies aimed at: coordinating many aspects of an individual's actions, thereby enabling an internal dialogue (the basis for negotiating social roles and self-image); liberating creativity in the individual; smooth inclusion of mental patterns in the repertoire of behaviours of an individual (habit formation); and a successful fight for recognition for the identity he or she creates in interactive contexts (Nowak-Dziemianowicz 2016). These skills are essential for social adaptation. So, it is important to know whether, in confronting situations related to migration, the respondents are in possession of a coherent concept of themselves, or does migration provoke a sense of crisis? Therefore, the steps and practices undertaken to build a coherent personal identity are of considerable interest.

4. What is the role or function of perceived cultural distances between intermediary groups and newly arrived migrants in the processes of settlement and developing social anchors? Recently arrived migrants have contacts with numerous important social groups that are diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion and nationality. Therefore, cultural distance (Baran and Boski 2016) would seem to play an important role in the perception of the new place of residence (whether from a cultural, social, economic, political or religious perspective) as a place where migrants could potentially settle down in the long term and develop new social anchors to strengthen settlement processes. Relations with the dominant group are of particular importance here.

5. Is it possible to construct a typology of settlement practices that would be useful both for research and practice (e.g. for social policy) and which would be constructed in terms of the number, quality and type of relations with groups that mediate culturally, ethnically and religiously – including groups close to the migrants and those closer to the host society? This typology might serve to structure the concept of “settlement” at a general level, but also evaluate strategies that determine how permanent that settlement would be. Categories contained in the typology might enable us to mark out the “successes” and “failures” (or barriers) of migrants engaged in settlement processes, based on their relations with intermediary groups. These descriptions would constitute useful input in the process of creating social policies in the field of migrant integration and their inclusion within the host society.

6. How do the settlement processes of the representatives of the control group differ from the settlement processes of the representatives of the research group? Finding an answer to this question is crucial in the diagnosis of the role of an intermediary group among newcomers. How important are intermediary groups in the process of settlement when we compare migrants who have support among related

intermediary group with other migrants who have not real opportunities to establish relations with related intermediary groups (e.g. national and ethnic groups) due to the lack of wider settlement of their compatriots in studied area?

The above research questions are also the point of reference for the study of the control group.

Current state of research

Research on the settlement processes of migrants in the international context has been conducted for many years and continues to this day. In the 21st century, the most popular subject in European research has been the migrations of citizens of the new EU member states (see, e.g., Boswell and Geddes 2010; Fassmann et al. 2009). In the context of settlement processes, scientists have emphasized that there is a need to analyse this phenomenon in relational, structural, spatial and temporal terms (Ryan 2018, 2019; Grzymała-Kazłowska 2016). Although much attention has been devoted to temporary migration (Eade, Garapich and Drinkwater 2006); circular migration or “liquid migration” (Fihel, Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2007), Louise Ryan noticed (2019), in research on the migration of Poles, that they were starting to adopt new, long-term patterns of stay – a subject of interest to this project as well. Furthermore, Mark Granovetter argued that “actors do not behave or decide as atoms outside a social context, nor do they adhere slavishly to a script written for them by the particular intersection of social categories that they happen to occupy. Their attempts at purposive action are instead embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations” (Granovetter 1985: 487).

Unfortunately, the current state of knowledge on the settlement practices of migrants coming to Poland, to a specific region of the country and on the role of intermediary groups in these practices does not contribute much to solving the problems mentioned above.

In the case of Białystok and the region of Podlasie to which it belongs, the situation of Belarusians is the one most often analysed from a historical perspective (e.g. Barwiński 2014; Mironowicz 2015) or with regard to identity issues (Sadowski 1997). Finding studies on contemporary Belarusian migrations to Poland is difficult (see Dolińska 2017). It is similar to the literature on Tatars. Existing studies usually take a historical approach or are concerned with the identity of Polish Tatars (Bohdanowicz et al. 1997; Kamocki and Miśkiewicz 2004; Miśkiewicz 1990; Warمیńska 1999). Since the Crimean Tatars only began creating their community in and around Białystok after 2014, there are also few studies available on this (Radłowska 2016), although the issue of this social group has been raised in recent years because of the crisis in Ukraine (Egierska 2015). Among the works on Białystok and the Podlaskie Voivodeship, there are a few studies on migration, relating primarily to refugees (Cieślińska

2005; Grzymała-Moszczyńska and Nowicka 1998; Januszevska 2010; Ząbek 2002) and the situation of foreigners on the employment market (Haberela 2019).

Studies on foreigners in Lublin have largely focused on the migration of foreign students (Matacz 2014; Rózanowski 2014; Kruk 2014; 2020). The few collective publications by non-governmental organizations provide information, among other things, on the integration of migrants (Bieniecki and Pawlak 2012; Bieniecki et al., 2015), problems connected with the presence of foreigners at the level of a selected district (Kawczyńska – Butrym, Mirona Ogryzko-Wiewiórkowska, Butrym 2012) and the everyday life of foreigners in Lublin (Kawa 2009; Kulik and Skrzypczak 2011; Duda-Jastrzębska and Nazruk-Napora 2019; Dąbrowska 2020). Discussion of economic “settlement” in Lublin, especially of Ukrainians, can be found in reports of the National Bank of Poland (Chmielewska et al 2018; Strzelecki 2020).

As for studies on migration to Rzeszów (a capital city of the Podkarpacie Voivodeship), the situation is similar to that of Lublin – the most developed branch of research is on student migration (see, e.g., Wojakowski 2012; Inglot-Brzęk and Stopa 2015; Długosz 2018). However, an analysis of the literature on the subject shows that in this region Ukrainian citizens are predominant and there are usually economic or educational reasons for migration (Bieńkowska, Ulański and Szymańska 2010: 39). On the other hand, in the field of employment market research, two characteristics of migration to the Podkarpacie stand out. The first is a strong increase in migration. The second is the preponderance of Ukrainian citizens among those employed on the basis of an employer’s declaration of employment (approx. 94%) (Barwińska-Małałowicz and Tęcza 2018: 266). Although the topic of migration is present in academic discussions on the proposed research area, actual studies on settlement practices and the role of intermediary groups with regard to so-called “newest” migrants are particularly negligible.

Polish academic literature on the settlement of migrants living in Poland has focused on the issue of the role of Ukrainian entrepreneurs in the process of settlement (Andrejuk 2017) and the role of bridging capital in the adaptation process (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2015). The tendency of migrants to settle has been analysed (Kubiciel-Lodzińska 2017), as well as the spatial patterns (Fihel 2006) and the Polish migration policy (Duszczuk et al. 2010). Besides studies on highly-skilled migration (see, e.g., Doherty et al. 2013), there seem to be no in-depth literature in the context of migration “on one’s own”.

At the same time, a broad analysis of migrant settlement practices seems to be a highly topical issue – in view of Poland’s transformation from a transit country to destination country (Górny et al. 2010). The proposed research problem belongs to the broader discussion on dynamic transformation in patterns of mobility (e.g. Castles 2010), a transformation that significantly impacts our understanding and analysis of international migration. So, undertaking this research problem can be justified by the following:

In terms of the size of migration waves, in comparison with 2014, the 2020 officially registered population of migrants from the former USSR increased significantly. In the Podlaskie Voivodeship, the Belarusian population rose from 882 to 6,014 – representing the second largest Belarusian population, after Mazowieckie Voivodeship (UDSC 2014, 2020a) (legally staying in Poland.) In the case of Crimean Tatars living in the same voivodeship, the population comes under Ukrainian migrants in official data (it is a culturally misleading categorization). However, an interview conducted as part of the preliminary analyses with a representative for Tatar (refugees from Crimea) matters from the Supreme College of the Muslim Religious Union (MZR) in the Republic of Poland, shows that Crimean Tatars settled in Poland as a result of Russia's annexation of Crimea (2014). Currently, there are 88 people in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, and the number is stable. increasing. In the case of Ukrainian migrants living in the Lubelskie and Podkarpackie voivodeships, a significant increase has also been recorded. In the Lubelskie Voivodeship, the number of documented Ukrainians has increased from 1,257 in 2014 to 11,367 in 2020. In the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, the number increased from 956 people in 2014 to 6,444 in 2020 (UDSC 2014, 2020b). The data presented, although concerning only selected voivodeships and groups of migrants, indicates a change in the migration status of Poland – a shift from a transit country to a destination. The data on the population size of Belarusian and Crimean Tatars is limited to the Podlaskie Voivodeship – and data on Ukrainian migrants to the Lubelskie and Podkarpackie voivodeships – due to the specific research sample selected which in turn was due to the location of ethnically, religiously and culturally related intermediary groups. A full description of the sample selection methodology is provided in the research methodology section.

The area of Poland to be investigated is important for the project which aims to single out the role of intermediary groups: most of all indigenous national and ethnic minorities, including groups that are culturally and religiously related. According to the last Census of 2011, about 46,000 ethnic Belarusians live in Poland. Establishing the exact number of Belarusians is a difficult matter. Researchers have provided various estimates, as high as 180,000 (Saifullayeu and Giczan 2020). An absolute majority of them live in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, including over 8,000 in Białystok itself. At the time of the 2011 Census, 1,054 people (GUS) in the Lubelskie Voivodeship declared their membership of the Ukrainian minority. The Ukrainian minority is rather scattered here and lives in small groups but one of the largest of them functions in Lublin. In the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, historically a largely Ukrainian area (in a broad meaning that includes the Lemko people) (Rudnicka 2015), the Ukrainian minority has a population of 3,421, many of whom live in Rzeszów. In each city in the region there is a developed, social minority infrastructure which, we may hypothesize, supports the settlement processes of newly arrived migrants. The Ukrainian minority here is a kind of “parallel reality,” functioning alongside the dominant group but mainly applying its own cultural principles (e.g., Babiński 1988).

Moreover, it is assumed that the control group is examined in the same social context as the research group, in order to take into account the same social processes that apply to the settlement of migrants. In particular, we mean the “character” of Eastern Poland (see: scientific goal of the project – subject of research).

We believe that the historic urbanization processes are a predecessor and model of settlement processes in the cities of consideration. Social processes are usually “new” in each case each instantiation has its own unique characteristics. However, the analyzed migrant settlement practices take place in cities which, with their peripheral place in Poland (Przygodzka 2012), are examples of places where urbanization is an “unfinished” process. We should treat urbanization as a complex and multi-faceted socio-economic process, related to changes in forms of social ties and relations, the spread of an “urbanism as a way of life” and the transformation of rural communities and the modernization of the entire settlement network (Szymańska and Korolko 2015: 20). In this context, it should be noted that cities are a recurring aspect of modernity and postmodernity to the extent that we more and more refer to the “urbanization of society” itself (Malikowski et al. 2015). This urbanization of society usually includes the acquisition of urban and even metropolitan cultural competencies – an urban lifestyle, professional and educational competencies, etc. – by migrants, but it also changes the practices of existing city dwellers. In the context of “unfinished” urbanization, the cities selected for the research project may turn out to be interesting cases due to the processes of “ruralization” (Sadowski 1981, 1994). Migrants are usually sucked in by large cities with a well-developed infrastructure, representing a higher (than villages) level of economic development, but also possessing a specific “social climate” (see Sassen 1991, Florida 2010). So, the question arises whether, for example, Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów, which are not metropolitan centers from an all-national perspective, will be attractive in the context of migrant settlement practices. With the “multiplicity” of intermediary groups, do these cities actually support the settlement process? Or are they, on the contrary, only transfer cities – pushing migrants away? Another important issue is the possibility of using the social capital with which migrants come to a given place, or the possibility of its expansion, or vice versa, the inability to use it. The location of the cities in question is also important: their proximity to the state border, an important consideration when ranking factors that influence settlement practices.

The proposed analysis of settlement practices will represent a contribution to current research on recent international migration. It takes into account the role of important groups that are culturally, ethnically and religiously close to migrants, which itself is innovative and the research will be carried out in locations which, due to their “tradition” of ethnic diversity and the process of “unfinished” urbanization, provide a unique social background for the analysis of factors that may influence the processes of settlement, including the creation of social anchors, adaptation strategies, integration processes and identity transformations.

Important processes in Belarusians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatar migrations

Until today, there have been few studies of migrant settlement processes in the eastern border of Poland (at the same time being the border of the European Union [Sadowski 2019]). However, this in itself is not a sufficient reason to claim that the project is innovative. Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów are cities that are “traditionally” ethnically and culturally diverse. Cultural diversity was previously brought about by the change in the location of the border – a change that “always” means that a population living in their own territory overnight becomes an ethnic or national minority. These groups have created a system of formal and informal institutions whose broad function is to support people with ethno-national and religious issues.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 triggered migration movements that included the eastern Poland border region. Over time – and especially after the 2014 annexation of Crimea by Russia and the crisis in eastern Ukraine – migrations to Poland, including its eastern area, have intensified. It is likely that this migration will also increase as a result of the recent incidents in Belarus related to the presidential elections of August 9, 2020. This latter situation may provoke hitherto unknown migration movements and settlement practices, perhaps including phenomena that have been difficult to observe thus far. In general, it can be said that the eastern border of Poland represents a multi-layered ethnic and national structure that is constantly being (re)created, the result of the already functioning national and ethnic minorities (Belarusians, Ukrainians, Polish Tatars) and migrants who came after the collapse of the USSR and who in turn “provoked” subsequent (chain) migrations. This situation ultimately became a significant determinant for the destination for the latest wave of migration (since 2014). So, the analysis of settlement practices in this project is not only intended to show migrant settlement practices as a process in itself, but also to consider the key role of various intermediary groups. An innovative aspect of this analysis of settlement practices is its taking into account a broader range of groups involved in migration. It is not restricted to the dominant society and intermediary groups which are the product of chain migrations – creating social structures that facilitate the arrival of one’s relatives or friends.

The study includes not only migration from the East. There is also a need to show the specificity of settlement processes in a more general context, compared with other newcomers whose migrations are not of a chain character.

On the other hand most of all this analysis considers the role of indigenous communities that are culturally, religiously, ethnically and nationally close to the migrants, groups having been part of the host society for years. Research in Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów makes it possible to consider the role of all the important actors involved in the settlement of new migrants – something practically impossible to achieve elsewhere in Poland. The proposed study is to be conducted in a kind of

unique social laboratory and the results may lead to the redefinition of factors that affect settlement processes, with a particular emphasis on the role of intermediary groups – including the role of indigenous minorities.

The entry of new waves of migrants into the host society generally takes place through ethnic migrant institutions (“parallel societies”) that act as an intermediary and link between the newcomers and the “indigenous institutions” (see Diner 1998: xxix-xxx; Babiński 1988: 199–202). In the present project, existing minority groups also play this role. Poland is becoming an immigrant country, so a research perspective that considers the role of intermediary groups and looks beyond the role of the dominant society and previous waves of migrants establishes the innovative and relevant nature of the project.

It should also be added that from the perspective of research on migration, it is innovative to apply a specific control group: a group of migrants who have no close, “primary” connections with any intermediary groups under investigation. Considering the fact that studies on migration mostly focus on chain migration, the analysis of such cases is innovative and may be revealing.

The existing Polish and international scientific literature does not contain comprehensive research focused on contemporary migrant settlement processes similar to the cases of this research – with an area located not only on the Polish border, but also on the border of the European Union, simultaneously covering three groups of migrants (Ukrainians, Belarusians and Crimean Tatars) coming from the former USSR. Contemporary migrations from the former USSR can be viewed from various perspectives. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many internal migrants suddenly became foreign migrants from the perspective of the “new” countries. Many researchers (Brubaker 1995; Blakely 2012; Sahadeo 2007; Brunarska 2013) have considered migrations from the peripheral areas of the former USSR to Russia in terms of post-imperial migration. This approach is characterized by Russia’s dominant role as a country hosting peripheral migrants, as well as the key role played by metropolises (cultural, legal, political, sentimental). However, after the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the external borders of the state were opened and this made new migration directions possible, ones without post-imperial ties and without the support of migration networks. More than 20 years later, subsequent groups of migrants from the territories of the former Soviet republics began to migrate to the eastern border of the European Union. This research project represents a contribution to migration studies, in the following areas in particular: the formation of settlement processes within a kind of “domesticated” area. The “domestication” in point is evidenced by the presence of previous migrants, most of whom do not possess the current status of migrants. Moreover, some of these groups have always lived in Poland (a feature of cities like Białystok, Lublin, Rzeszów); b/ support of settlement processes by intermediary groups that help newly arrived migrants maintain “old” (pre-immigration) cultural patterns; c/ the role of indigenous intermediary groups that are nationally,

ethnically and religiously related to migrants in the process of implementing the way of life of the dominant society. Study of this role may provide new scientific data on factors supporting or inhibiting adaptation or integration; d/ development of the scientific discourse on the concept of social anchoring (Grzymała-Każłowska 2013) and diverse settlement processes (Ryan 2018) – the influence of intermediary groups on the creation of new social anchors and study of the areas in the host society where the creation of social anchors is more or less challenging and may perhaps lead to conflict.

Research methodology

The theoretical assumptions of the study encourage the use of a triangulation of research methods, to strengthen the accuracy and reliability of the empirical measurements made, and to reduce limitations resulting from selection of one particular method, by looking at the issue under analysis from different points of view (Olsen 2004).

The project considers mainly qualitative methods: the research goals we have formulated call for field analysis, which will allow for the observation of facts and processes in their natural social environments, and the proposed method will, in our opinion, enable the attainment of the most accurate and reliable research possible (Babbie 2010: 310). In the study, we will make use of in-depth interviews and observations. The triangulation we have adopted accounts for the use of statistical analysis as one element of the existing data analysis.

Desk Research analysis will cover qualitative and quantitative measures and will include an analysis of the existing literature (interpreted data), statistical data (raw data), source materials (subjective and objective) arising from archives and other public institutions and the contents of social media platforms concerning: a/ phenomenon and processes related to immigration to Poland in general, b/ specific features of immigration from Belarus and Ukraine, c/ the mobility of the Crimean Tatars, especially following the Crimean crisis, d/ urbanization and ruralisation processes in large Polish cities, e/ the regions analysed and the intermediary groups functioning within them, which are relevant to the issues under consideration. The collected research material will be subjected to content analysis and a secondary analysis of statistical data.

The sample size will be dictated by a deliberate (expert) selection, assuming that the realized number of interviews in research will ensure theoretical saturation with the empirical data (Konecki 2000). The decision to use a non-probabilistic (non-random) sampling scheme means that the error resulting from its selection cannot be estimated. The scheme utilised corresponds to the research objectives defined for this project. The use of an expert sample selection scheme allows the research to reach

so-called opinion leaders of the studied communities and facilitates the search for answers to the research questions. Moreover, this approach also has a methodological and theoretical justification (see Pasikowski 2015).

The selection criteria for the migrant groups are: origin, time spent in Poland, place of residence, gender, family status, category of profession (low, medium and highly skilled). For the control group – It is hardly possible to unequivocally identify groups of migrants whose members we could confidently claim as not being subject to the influence of intermediary groups; therefore we decided to search for individuals who fulfil this criterion as much as possible. Considered as key recruitment criteria are: lack of formal affiliation to a national (ethnic) minority or non-governmental organizations through which they can be represented (objective criterion), and no indication of appropriate intermediary groups in the respondents' declaration (subjective criterion).

Additionally, anyone in possession of a 'Polish Card' is excluded from the study, as we wish to focus only on those people who have no documented Polish origins. The recruitment of respondents will be carried out using the snowball method. A complete transcript of each interview will also be made available. Content analysis through the use of specialized software – [Atlas.ti](#) will allow for interpretation of the collected research material.

Participant observation will complement the qualitative research. The purpose here is to identify everyday cultural practices specific to particular groups in their own social environments.

In the study, a triangulation of research methods was decided upon for two reasons: a) the subject area has not been scientifically studied in-depth so far, so the choice of a triangulation of research methods is done with the aim of increasing the quality of the research and minimisation of measurement error (Rzesutek 2018), b) reliable descriptions of migrant settlement processes requires information from various sources (multiple research groups, data analysis, content analysis), which in turn suggests various methods for obtaining the information.

The use of qualitative methods aims to uncover the nature of the phenomenon under study, considering the diverse roles of actors and social groups involved in the settlement processes (both migrant and intermediary groups). This provides an opportunity to look at the migration processes from the point of view of the people involved (Górny 1998). Thus, "(...) the data of a researcher of culture are always <somebody's>, and never <nobody's>. (...) This kind of data, as the subject of the researcher's theoretical reflection, already belongs to someone else's real-life experience and they are just as this active experience has made them" (Znaniecki 2008: 68). This means that one cannot study social reality without taking human experience into account. In the case of the analysis of migration, this approach allows us to delve into the very tissue of experiences that, in a way, model its nature.

Summary

The proposed analysis of settlement practices is to contribute to the current research on recent international migration. It takes into account the role of important groups that are culturally, ethnically and religiously close to migrants, which itself is innovative and the research will be carried out in locations which, due to their “tradition” of ethnic diversity and the process of “unfinished” urbanization, provide a unique social background for the analysis of factors that may influence the processes of settlement, including: the creation of social anchors, adaptation strategies, integration processes and identity transformations.

The category of “intermediary groups” plays a key role in this project. We are interested in its impact on settlement processes and its theoretical relationship with other concepts used in this proposal. Moreover, we believe that research material collected in the field study will provide us with data that will allow us to construct a typology of settlement practices. We intend to find out whether the category of “intermediary group” is a factor helping us to explain settlement strategies and the development of other important processes related to the phenomenon of migration.

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