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***Linking Northern Communities socially, culturally and economically: East
European Immigration in Scotland***

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Abstract:

This paper seeks to combine practical experience resulting from outreach activities and knowledge exchange on the topic of integration of various waves of East European migrants in Scotland and an analysis of several theoretical approaches defining and measuring integration and its success. Migration of large numbers of East European migrants from the so-called A8 countries (the eight East European countries from the former Soviet bloc out of the ten that joined the EU in 2004) has changed the dynamics of local communities across the UK. Scotland has, with some delay, experienced a particularly strong influx in recent years. Among the national migrant groups, the Polish community leads the statistical tables in numbers and in the presence of entire families that decide to settle. The main issues identified by community workers, local authorities, NGOs and charities, and by representatives of the East European communities themselves, are problems with speedy language acquisition, social and cultural isolation, and ill-matching qualifications (over- or under-qualification), but also a good work ethic and evidence of increasing success in establishing themselves in society (particularly for better educated migrants). Knowledge exchange project can positively influence the ability of local communities to raise awareness and adapt policies in the local context. The activities and outputs of the 'Linking Northern Communities' project and the feedback received in consequence show that public debate and investing in schools to improve dialogue between children, who by nature are more open-minded to 'others', help awareness and instigate local initiatives: examples include pupils becoming aware of newcomers' different culture and history, the use of historical heritage to plan events with contemporary impact, the adaptation of new elements in the school curriculum, involvement of local authorities and a greater understanding of administrators of the needs to newcomers, lobbying in parliament through the CPG on Poland, etc.

Foreword

From October 2014 to April 2015 the Scottish Universities Insight Institute supported a project of research, public outreach activities and knowledge exchange between academics, charities and NGOs, schools as well as representatives from local government and parliamentary offices in Scotland which aimed at improving the understanding of processes of cultural and social integration of East European migrants into Scottish society. "Linking Northern Communities socially, culturally and economically: East European Immigration in Scotland" has also benefited from cooperation with two established projects: the Edinburgh-based [Polish-Scottish Heritage Trail](#) (an outreach programme that has come to an end) and the ESRC-funded [Social Support and Migration in Scotland Project](#) (2014-17) led by Prof. Rebecca Kay at Glasgow University.

The project was also supported by participants from

- Intercultural Research Centre, Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh
- University of Aberdeen, School of Divinity, History and Philosophy, School of Education and School of Social Sciences
- Cosla, Strategic Migration Partnership
- Feniks (Fife Migrants Forum) and See Me, Mental Health NGO

- Cross party group on Poland in the Scottish Parliament (Jean Urquhart MSP, Convenor)
- Scottish Family Business Association
- Polish Association Aberdeen
- GRAMNet
- Polish Cultural Festival Association (PCFA), Polish-Scottish Heritage Project
- Błażej Marczak, photographer, Aberdeen
- Polish-Scottish Choir, Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen
- ASBIRO UK CIC Ltd, School of Business and Personal Development
- SSAMIS, University of Glasgow

This paper presents some of the main results and outputs from the programme, which included three public roundtable events in Aberdeen and Glasgow, two of which included photographic exhibitions. The other outputs were three school projects based in Aberdeen and Inverness at Walker Road/Torry, Sunnybank, both in Aberdeen, and the Polish Saturday School Inverness, which involved the production of teaching materials and the development of a diversity in teaching strategy which was tested through the focus on Wojtek the Polish Bear (World War II) and the Polish Map of Scotland.

Introduction

The project was seeking to address four main questions:

- How does awareness of joint heritage links between Scotland and Eastern Europe, the influence of historical memory, identity and culture further or hinder the acceptance of East Central European newcomers in Scottish society?
- How do the attitudes and reaction of Scottish society to migrant settlement influence integration processes?
- How can Scotland and Scottish society, especially at a local level, best benefit from the integration of East European migrants? (Examples: Diversity-based learning models at school, implications for the local economy, shared cultural projects, mental health, etc.).
- How can we learn from the experiences of the Polish migrant community, and how can these experiences be best transferred to those of other migrant groups (with particular attention to Lithuanians, Slovaks and Romanians)?

The work on this project is based on changing perceptions between migrants and the local communities defined in terms of relationships (to what is left behind as much as new encounters) and the conditions of settlement and integration within a new life context.¹ This approach has some value for scholars and policy-makers in Scotland who try to assess local differences in migration patterns and the consequences of failed or successful integration into local society and local

¹ Findlay, McCollum, Coulter and Gayle (2015), p. 391.

markets. It analyses behavioural patterns of migrants, which might be useful to local charities, NGOs and self-help groups working with migrants.

Background: the numbers

The wave of European migration that Scotland has seen since 2004, when the so-called A8² countries joined the EU, however, is a new phenomenon. The success of attracting migrants to Scotland is reflected in the statistics, although London and the south-east of the UK remain the strongest magnets for migrants from the A8 countries. Accurate up-to-date figures are hard to come by. The Poles are by far the largest group of EEA migrants.³ But migration from other A8 countries such as Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Romania, but also Russia, which is not an EEA or A8 country, has also steadily increased. One of the pledges by the Scottish National Party for an independence referendum was that Scotland, which has a stagnant or even falling volume of native population, needs an approach to immigration that differs from policies for England, where immigration has triggered political protests reflected in the strengthening of the UKIP vote.⁴ In contrast, in Scotland low birth rates and out-emigration still create gaps in the labour market, particularly in rural areas, which migrants from East Central Europe have been encouraged to fill.

This picture is not without historical precedents. For centuries, Scotland has been a country whose native population migrated to other parts of the world.⁵ Emigration has traditionally dominated the picture for Scotland where rural areas constitute 95% of the landmass but only 18% of the population.⁶ There are long-standing historical links of Scottish migrants to Poland-Lithuania, Scandinavia and Russia, and throughout the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries large numbers of Scots had been a constant presence among the soldiers, pedlars, clergy and merchants in much of early modern Central and Eastern Europe.⁷ In the twentieth century, the direction of migration reversed as a democratic Britain proved more attractive than the empires of Central Europe, fascism and Stalinism during the 1930s and the Second World War. There was a large influx of Polish migrants, particularly to Edinburgh and Clydebank, right after the Second World War as a result of Polish-British military cooperation against the axis powers and the relocation of the Polish government in exile to London. It is not just due to the large number of recent Polish migrants, but also owing to this well-established, existing post-war immigrant population from Poland, that Poles have a 'basic social capital' that puts them at the top of the social hierarchy of A8 migrants today.⁸ A survey in 2013 by the Migration Observatory told us that in 2012 'Scotland hosts about 9% of all those living in the UK who were born in Poland. Polish migrants account for close to 15% of the non-

² The eight countries that acceded to the EU in 2004.

³ EEA migrants are defined as born in one of the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

⁴ de Lima and Wright (2009), p. 393.

⁵ A selection: Worthington (2003); Worthington (2012); Worthington (2001); Frost (2001); Harper (2003); Calder (2003).

⁶ de Lima and Wright (2009), pp. 391-404.

⁷ Unger (2008); Devine and Hesse (2011), Fedosov (2009-2015).

⁸ White (2011), p. 3.

UK born population of Scotland, compared to 8.4% of the non-UK born population of the UK as a whole'.⁹

The trend towards growth is obvious in comparison with the Scottish census numbers of 2011, which show that a total of 369,284 migrants (of all origins) were resident in Scotland. 55,231 residents were Polish-born, more than double of the next group of migrants to Scotland, from India.¹⁰ 67 per cent of recent EEA migrants were born in the A8 accession countries at the time of the 2011 Census. 63 per cent of all migrants had come to Scotland in 2001 or after and are therefore classified as 'recent' migrants (under 10 years residence in the UK).¹¹

While the impact of migration on the Central Belt is quite well covered in scholarship and the press,¹² the census of 2011 revealed that the influx of recent migration from the A8 countries has increased in other areas of Scotland. In Aberdeen City we see the largest proportion of people born outside the UK (16%), on par with Edinburgh. Aberdeen City and shire and other rural areas in the North-East saw the largest increase of migration in the 2011 census in comparison to pre-2011 numbers.¹³ Between 2002/3 and 2005/6, a period that includes the accession of the A8 countries in 2004, the Grampian area increased its share of migrant workers from 12.7 to 14.5% of the Scottish migrant total, mainly from A8 countries. Since then, and despite the recession of 2008, the North-East has continued to possess important pull factors.

Migration patterns and the issue of integration

In the first period after the accession of A8 countries in 2004, migrants were usually male and single, between 20 and 45 years old.¹⁴ This has changed, however, in recent years. Anne White's research (SSEES/UCL) of families' migration patterns from Poland to England, for example, has shown that more families now follow a father or mother who usually migrate for work first to establish a secure income and a place to live.¹⁵ This observation was also borne out by the 2011 census which shows that recent migrants, especially from the EEA were more likely to live in couple or family households (only 9% in that category lived in single households, while student households were categorised separately, making up just under a third of all Polish migrants in Scotland); established migrants (more than 10 years in the country) meanwhile were more likely to live in single households.¹⁶

⁹ Vargas-Silva (2013), p. 6.

¹⁰ Cosla Strategic Migration Partnership website, Census (2011), <http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/migration-information/migration-statistics/census-2011> [accessed 15/06/2015]

¹¹ Scottish Government (March 2015), <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/data-warehouse.html#additionaltab> [last accessed 15/06/2015].

¹² Sergei Shubin has recently warned, however, that the real numbers of East European migrants to Scotland are not well researched and underestimated, as more attention is being paid to asylum seekers rather than a mobile East European work force settling in smaller rural communities; see Shubin (2012), p. 615.

¹³ Scottish Government (March 2015), table 3.2., see fn. 6. English as an Additional Language services in Aberdeen's statistical break-down in languages at all Aberdeen schools (excluding nurseries) is telling: 1152 Polish speakers in all 60 Aberdonian schools (primary and secondary), Arabic 158, Malayalam 150, Russian 145, Bengali 114, Lithuanian 113, Latvian 108, Urdu 104, Hungarian 71 and Spanish 63. <http://www.grampiancaredata.gov.uk/home?sobi2Task=sobi2Details&sobi2Id=703> [18-06-2015].

¹⁴ Cavanagh, Eirich, McLaren (2008), p. 15.

¹⁵ Anne White (2009), p. 68.

¹⁶ Scottish Government (March 2015), p. 12, Census 2011 chart 2.2., see fn. 6.

White's conclusions, presented at the first roundtable on 17 November 2014 at Aberdeen's Satrosphere Science Museum, are summarised here as follows:

- Many families seem likely to stay in the UK for the foreseeable future. The growth of the Polish economy as a whole is irrelevant to migrants who would only consider returning to their home region, where wages are still low and employment scarce.¹⁷ Families feel they cannot afford to relocate to Poland and they do not want to do so since their reasons to return would be to live in their own homes and to reunite with their extended families, not to improve their economic situation and status.
- UK Poles tend to believe that their children should lead settled lives, which makes them reluctant to uproot the family a second time, whether to return to Poland or to move to a new place in Britain; they do not even consider moving from Aberdeen to Glasgow. Hence their mobility for the UK job market declines as a result.
- Although it became commonplace in the 1990s for one Polish parent to migrate and the rest of the family to remain in Poland, the emotional impact of separation on families and communities has caused increasing disquiet in Poland. Parents are willing to make considerable sacrifices in order to keep the family together and this means that parents often take on jobs for which they are overqualified and hang on in the UK for the sake of the children despite their feelings of personal frustration and social exclusion.

These changes in migrant behaviour have consequences for 'integration', the main theme of this paper. Scotland, particularly in rural parts, had to become used to much larger fluctuating migrant communities which, from the Scottish perspective, often present a challenge to social services. Communication is sometimes difficult due to a lack of language skills and there is pressure on resources. As male, single seasonal workers, who were still the norm in the early years of this millennium, have been replaced by more families who are ready to strike new roots, particularly as children find it easier than adults to integrate into a new culture and society, it is important to focus less on migration processes but on 'integration' itself, a concept that can be difficult to define.¹⁸ Christian Joppke has recently criticised that the definition of integration used by migration scholars ignores concepts of integration formed over centuries by theorists of state and society, from early modern religious strife to the industrialisation processes of the nineteenth century. In the past all societies which disintegrated, often through civil war and social fragmentation, had to find ways of (re-) 'integration', producing a functioning order. Joppke unmasks contemporary (liberal) integration discourse in much of the scholarship on migration as an attempt to describe not 'integration' (ordering processes) but assimilation processes 'in the sense of neutralising a perceived fundamental threat to the stability and integrity of society that is presumed to exist before the immigrant sets foot in it'.¹⁹

For this project it is necessary to identify what we mean by integration. The arrival of migrants in a new country always involves changing expectations, adjustment to different norms and some effort to find a *modus vivendi* within local communities. Following Joppke, community integration is not synonymous with acculturation or assimilation; in fact, our argument is that integration is possible only when heritage, history, memory and identity with one's traditions and culture (whether

¹⁷ Confirmed also by David McCollum and Allan Findlay (2011).

¹⁸ Eckhart Olshausen (1997), Versuch einer Definition des Begriffs 'Integration' im Rahmen der Historischen Migrationsforschung, in: Mathias Beer, Martin Kintzinger, Marita Krauss (eds), *Migration und Integration. Aufnahme und Eingliederung im historischen Wandel* (Stuttgart), pp. 27-35.

¹⁹ Joppke (2013), p. 158.

religious, linguistic, social etc.) accompany migrants into a new context in a way responsive to the new environment. It does not necessarily follow a cutting of ties with the country and culture and norms of origin, but rather, defined in spiritual terms, constitutes a 'pilgrimage of the heart'.²⁰ Willing to bring the family and 'settle down' usually means that people preserve and treasure what is familiar to them from their childhood, but are also open up to learn and enrich these traditions with new cultural markers and traditions. Integration as an appropriation process translates into the creation of new hybrid cultural identities. Such 'settling in' often has the effect of reducing the mobility of the workforce (giving up the mentality of 'one leg is here, another there'²¹), but it indicates a commitment to embrace life as a family in the new context of local and wider Scottish society.

The main focus of this paper will be on Polish migrants, followed by some insights into the Lithuanian community, reflected in the work of Vitalija Stepušaitytė, Neringa Liubinienė and Vytis Čiubrinskas. The paper draws also on the themes raised during the roundtables which accompanied the project, where actions and behaviour of East Central European migrants were discussed and historical links explored. It shifts later to the less researched topic of Scottish reactions to East European migrant integration in local Scottish communities and finally tests the transferability of the Polish experience to other migrant groups.

Integration and Identity

Migrants' acknowledgement of national identity has often been used as a measure of integration. The Census reports that

around a quarter of established EEA and established non-EEA migrants reported „Scottish only“ national identity (25 and 26 per cent respectively). A further 16 per cent of established EEA migrants reported „British only“ national identity, compared to 31 per cent of established non-EEA migrants. Conversely, „other Identity only“ national identity was most common amongst recent arrivals from EEA and non-EEA countries (84 and 71 per cent respectively).²²

These results differ from the attitudes that the older Polish migrant community adopted after they arrived at the end of the Second World War. These migrants became de facto political refugees as they could not return to their country where a communist regime was taking hold. They were single men whose integration happened usually through marriage to local girls in Edinburgh and Clydebank, and their assimilation (rather than integration) was so complete that Keith Sword, who in the 1990s led a major research project on this generation, predicted the complete disappearance of their community organisations and identity.²³ Yet despite that prediction, many left their identity and history as a legacy to their children, reflected in the continuous existence of Polish servicemen clubs and the organisation of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Polonia. Some 22,000 Poles decided to stay in Scotland after 1945. Until it ceased publication in 1957, the *Picture Post* captured many human interest stories among this group.²⁴ Their children had British passports but continued to

²⁰ Shubin (2012), p. 617.

²¹ Ibid., interview with Donatas, Lithuania, 27 June 2009 , p. 618.

²² Ibid., p. 16.

²³ Sword (1996), passim.

²⁴ Picture Post, see the archive under <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/product-highlights/history/picture-post-historical-archive.aspx> [18-06-2015]

identify with being at least partly Polish. This second generation started to transcend a national identity that was strongly defined by the interwar years after Poland had regained independent statehood in 1918 following almost 130 years of partition.

One identifier for the Edinburgh post-war Polish community was Wojtek, the bear found by Polish soldiers in Iran who was raised and trained among them, fought alongside British and Polish soldiers at Montecassino in 1944, and after the war lived out his days in Edinburgh Zoo.²⁵ Almost 200,000 pounds have been raised for his monument that is going to be unveiled in Princes Street Gardens on 7 November 2015. In contrast, recently settled Poles have generally no knowledge of this tradition, and the Wojtek story is not recognised among them or their children. Wojtek as a symbol and common identifier for the Polish servicemen triggered the development of a typically hybrid²⁶ expatriate culture combining traditions of the homeland with strong local links to Scotland.

Anne White has pointed out that the 'new migrants' from Poland usually keep a critical distance to the established Polonia in the UK, as they often remember rather very different versions of their country of origin. 'New' migrants also want to get on to make their careers in their chosen new environment, not direct their energies at a memory and identity culture with little relevance to themselves.²⁷ There is a danger, however, of simplistic categorisations. As Anna Ruszel, holder of the Women Entrepreneurship Ambassador Award 2014 and a co-founder of the Polish Professional Forum (PPF), pointed out in one of the roundtable discussions, there is a highly-educated, aspiring group of migrants from Poland who join higher education, go into banking, law, business and other career paths to become high-fliers. Not national but social distinctions matter for them. Awareness of social fragmentation exists within the Polish migrant community, with distrust and even a 'discourse of hostility' towards those who do not succeed and live on the margins, such as the homeless, Polish Roma communities, and those with little or no language skills.²⁸

When researching cultural identity that migrants bring with them, or consciously leave behind, caution is needed in the light of Sergei Shubin's observation (following Heidegger), that human beings cannot be defined by cultural characteristics but are self-interpreting and therefore continuously transforming themselves.²⁹ In post-Soviet East Central Europe, initial national posturing has slowly been giving way to more pragmatic attitudes, partly due to a closer integration within the European community, strengthened by a recent resurgence of Russia as a threatening power player to the East. As the statistics above demonstrate, however, despite such macro developments, on a personal and subjective level, identification with Scotland is a step that many refuse to take, or which just simply does not matter to them.

The example of the Scottish-Polish choir in Aberdeen (based at the University's Elphinstone Institute)³⁰ is an interesting case study, where several Polish migrant members who initially arrived with little knowledge of English have been consciously seeking contact with Scottish culture by

²⁵ The Wojtek film and website on Polish-Scottish Heritage: http://polishscottishheritage.co.uk/?heritage_item=wojtek-the-bear-polish-soldier-on-his-majesty-payroll [16-06-2015]

²⁶ Hall (1992), pp. 441-449.

²⁷ White (2011), p. 4, and Garapich (2011), pp. 5-10.

²⁸ White (2011), p. 4-5.

²⁹ Shubin (2012), p. 617.

³⁰ See the Polish-Scottish Choir's on the Elphinstone Institute's website: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/public-engagement/polish-scottish.php> [16-06-2015]

celebrating their own, Polish songs (often songs from the Polish Tatra Highlands, with a specific local accent and cultural identity, rationalising their choice of home near the Scottish Highlands). Reflecting the practice of transnational migration³¹, several members (Scottish and Polish) have marriage partners from other countries. There is a tendency to stress commonalities when the members of the choir talk about the music they present (e.g. on Radio Shmu FM, the local Polish radio station, and at the Aberdeen May Festival on 31 May 2015): 'We both lost a lot of battles, everything starts in A minor and sea shanties from Peterhead merge seamlessly with songs about whaling from Poland' (Grace, Scotland, Leader of the choir and storyteller).

Singing songs from Poland provides the chance to travel back home through cultural practice every now and then, while singing with Scottish people in the choir who themselves learn Polish songs provides the integration the newcomers seek, based on mutuality. Again this must not be confused with assimilation. Shubin gives similar examples through religious practices, which also connect communities through shared (religious) rituals: 'The church is probably one of the few things which changed least for the Polish people: the society has changed, politics, economics, norms are changing, but when you go back to the church, you go back to the same ritual. So you do not have to readjust.' (Edyta, Poland, 13 April 2010).³² Whether a church or a choir, creating shared spaces and common social and symbolic activities can bring comfort to the sense of displacement that many migrants feel.

Cultural markers and 'transnationalism'

This process has been studied by social anthropologists who defined the 'in-between' status of migrants as 'transnationalism':

a process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated 'transmigrants' [...] Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, feel concerns and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously.³³

This concept has been applied by Vytis Čiubrinskas to the example of the Lithuanian diaspora in Texas, which holds lessons for the example of A8 migrants to Scotland, particularly from countries that saw several generations and waves of migration, such as the Poles and Lithuanians who arrived during the nineteenth century (many as miners), post-1945 and post-1989/2004. Čiubrinskas found that children of Lithuanian immigrants long established in their diaspora communities abroad, particularly those displaced due to the Second World War, built up a long distance nationalism that 'empowered home and heritage'.³⁴ The homeland was often perceived as a victim (of war and Stalinism) and an almost mythical ideal; some among these communities reclaim the past by

³¹ Penninx, Spencer and Van Hear (2008), p. 11, <http://www.norface.org/files/migration-COMPAS-report.pdf> [16-06-2015]

³² Shubin (2012), p. 621.

³³ Glick-Schiller, Basch, Blanc-Szanton (1999), p. 26.

³⁴ Čiubrinskas (2009), pp. 85–95.

focusing on their genealogy and rewriting history as American Lithuanians, similar to other diaspora groups in the US.

Despite some similarities with the cultural politics of parts of the British Polonia, the concept has only limited applicability for the UK and Scotland, partly because British historical multiculturalism (apart from a home-grown Gaelic or Scottish-Irish version) differs greatly from the US 'melting pot' and American heritage culture. It certainly does not apply to recent migrants. As Anne White has recognised, many Poles from that group prefer 'individual' integration, avoiding to join heritage or other Polish organisations. This does not only inhibit local authorities' efforts to help the Polish diaspora as a whole, but it also prevents the formation of self-help networks. As identified by the European Integration Fund, networking can be one of the most effective activities for and by migrants, and is often better practiced by Lithuanian, Slovakian migrants and the Roma community than by Poles.³⁵ The downside is the creation of 'national ghettos' functioning on the basis of separate or even mutually hostile networks. So when, as in Edinburgh, a fundraising event for the Wojtek the Bear monument was offered the space of a Ukrainian cultural centre, many Polish participants, especially from the older generation, would not show up.³⁶

A shift towards 'transnational' identities was also noticeable before the referendum on Scottish independence in October 2014 which increased political interest and participation among the Polish community. In contrast to the barring of non-British European citizens from voting in the planned in/out referendum on British membership of the European Union, migrants from EEA countries (including A8) had a vote on Scottish independence. Some among the migrant community were in clear support of independence, such as the 'Poles for Yes'³⁷, while calls increased for the Polish leader of the European Council, Donald Tusk to insure that Poles living in Scotland after a possible vote for independence would not be cut off from European membership.³⁸ 85% declared their intention to participate. Those who did not want to vote gave as their main reason a feeling that they had no right to interfere in Scottish history in this way, a sign that they felt no ownership of Scottish culture and politics. Some, however, also expressed their fear that they would be 'kicked out'. Those most decidedly set against independence gave economic reasons, concerns about their citizenship status, and the fear that separatism could spread across Europe, including the historically and culturally divergent Silesian region in Poland.³⁹

Identity politics and the role of memory of home play an important role for successful integration. The British case stands in contrast to the German concept of *Leitkultur*, a proposal by the conservative Christian Democratic Party, which required migrants to agree to a 'value system of Germany's Christian-Occidental culture', which proved so controversial that it was quickly dropped;

³⁵ White (2001), pp. 5-6, and European Commission Integration Fund: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/integration-fund/index_en.htm [last accessed 17-06-2015]

³⁶ Interview with one of the organisers, Edinburgh, 2 June 2015.

³⁷ <http://polishforyes.net/> [10-06-2015]

³⁸ Polish Express online, <http://www.polishexpress.co.uk/polacy-ze-szkocji-prosza-tuska-o-pomoc/> [18-06-2015]

³⁹ Piętka-Nykaza, McGhee (2014), http://www.cpc.ac.uk/publications/cpc_briefing_papers/pdf/BP20_Polish_migrants_in_Scotland.pdf [16-06-2015]; see also the blog of the roundtable on 17 November 2014 Satrosphere, Aberdeen: <https://gramnet.wordpress.com/2014/12/04/poles-apart-a-model-for-polish-community-integration-in-scotland/> [16-06-2015]

instead a rather demanding language test was introduced in Germany, and in 2004 and 2005 several federal states legislated a ban on the veil for Muslim women in public office, which was also disputed and abolished in March 2015. The language test does not apply to A8 migrants, as they are not subject to residence restrictions the way that non-EEA migrants are. But these shifts in policy-making demonstrated that in the end the German government was more interested in pragmatic integration (e.g. focus on language ability, access of veiled women to jobs as teachers) which provides qualified labour and a harmonious coexistence rather than acculturation measured by national or cultural markers which migrants are expected to adopt (in marked difference to France, for example). This is, however, different within local society, where integration is measured by different criteria which often very much include expectations that migrants conform to local custom and culture, and the Scottish case can provide some guidance here.

Attitudes and reaction of Scottish society to migrant settlement

In scholarship, until recently, the focus was much more on migrants and integration themselves, not so much on the society in which they settled, 'while the societal systems into which the phenomenon of migration and the immigrants themselves are to be integrated is taken for granted'.⁴⁰ Although British (or Scottish) reaction to East European migrants has been a popular topic in the press and public,⁴¹ the depiction of migrants in mass media (and not only the tabloid press) often carry highly contradictory messages, e.g. that migrants 'take British' jobs but that they also are a burden by claiming unemployment and other benefits.⁴² A report on 'Migrant Entrepreneurs: Building Our Businesses, Creating Our Jobs' by the Centre for Entrepreneurs expresses concern over rising hostilities in the UK towards immigration due to such headlines. This is fuelled by political announcements aimed at curbing migration, particularly from A8 countries.⁴³ The rate of the unemployed (active) from EEA countries (including the A8 countries) in the 2011 census stood at 6% for recent and 4% for established migrants, lower than the 8 % and 5% among non-EEA migrants respectively. Instead of investigating the experience of local communities where migrants settle, the concentration on stereotypical images has often provided misleading information.

For many migrants the most important contact in the new environment is the employer, particularly for migrants who arrived for economic reasons. The increasing numbers of students from A8 countries in Scotland usually also seek part time or casual employment to finance their studies. Discussions repeatedly point at the higher educational and professional qualifications of recent EEA (including A8) migrants to Scotland, among whom 48% have such qualifications. The 2011 census also shows that in this group, from among all migrant groups, the largest proportion of people,

⁴⁰ Penninx, Spencer and Van Hear (2008), p. 12.

⁴¹ Just one example of many: The Economist Dec 14th 2013, <http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21591588-britons-loathe-immigration-principle-quite-immigrants-practice-bulgarians> [15-06-2015] and The Telegraph 18 June 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/11683356/Police-find-20-people-living-in-cramped-two-up-two-down.html> [18-06-2015].

⁴² Izabela Pompowska, European migrants: burden or benefit for the British economy? The depiction of EU migrants in the UK and its consequences, Migrants & Society 814F8, <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hrlc/documents/student-conference-2015/izabela-pompova-paper.pdf>, p. 8.

⁴³ workpermit.com website, <http://www.workpermit.com/news/2014-03-14/immigration-entrepreneurs-found-14-of-uk-start-up-businesses> [16-06-2015]

namely 50%, are in full-time employment. Unqualified among this group are only 12%, whereas the figure in Scottish society as a whole stands at 27%.⁴⁴

Yet many migrants, mainly due to language barriers or bureaucratic obstacles which prevent the recognition and transfer of qualifications (e.g. teaching qualifications), accept lower status and lower paid jobs, at least initially. This is reflected in a particularly large group among recent EEA migrants (30%) in 'elementary occupations', although among the 'skilled trade occupations' recent EEA migrants also make up the largest group (14%).⁴⁵

Integration in Scotland often means emancipation from dependency on a Scottish employer, as the following example shows. A., who was a teacher in Poland, and who is married to a Ukrainian, first took employment with a building firm in the city but was not happy with the attitudes towards the job he discovered among his fellow Scottish builders: 'Their heart was not in it, they never really finished a job properly. When I do a job, I do it 100 %, my heart has to be in it to do it right (A., Poland, Aberdeen in November 2013). He now runs his own successful painting business together with his wife whose better knowledge of English helps the communication with customers. As A. is a member of the Polish-Scottish choir in Aberdeen, the couple have also extended their integration in the local community; without the choir the couple would only have contacts to the wider Scottish community through formal work relations. The trend towards starting up one's own businesses is confirmed by Bartłomiej Kowalczyk, founder of Polish Business Link:

Since I have been here, I have witnessed the unexpected side-effect of Britain opening its labour market to Poles in May 2004. Tens of thousands of entrepreneurs from Poland have set up business in the UK. Most are still micro-businesses, though the more dynamic ones are expanding and taking on new employees. Typically, these firms are run by people who are taking responsibility for their own livelihoods rather than seeking work from an employer, and are busy creating new wealth for themselves and for the UK economy.⁴⁶

Entrepreneurial attitudes of Polish immigrants are reflected among the large number of Polish businesses that are starting all over the UK. A report by the immigration advice site workpermit.com of March 2014 shows that 17.2% of non-UK nationals have founded their own business as opposed to only 10.4% of Britons. Among the most entrepreneurial nations the Poles occupy place 6, the only A8 nation among the top ten.

Public opinion in the UK and Scotland consistently rate the Poles as good workers. A survey carried out by British Future in December 2013 found that 55% of those questioned agreed that Poles 'work hard for a living' and 54% said they 'make a contribution to Britain'.⁴⁷ It has almost become a stereotype to talk about 'hard-working Poles'. Most vociferous are employers in sectors where local work force is hard to recruit:

⁴⁴ Scottish Government (March 2015), pp. 26-27, see fn. 6.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 30.

⁴⁶ British Polish Chamber of Commerce (2015), <http://exportbritain.org.uk/latest-news/the-first-congress-of-polish-entrepreneurs-in-the-uk.html> [18-06-2015]

⁴⁷ The Guardian, Saturday 26 April 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/apr/26/polish-immigration-britain-cities-elections> [16-06-2015]

Because it is minimum wage work on a factory floor no Scottish people want to do [the work] and the Eastern Europeans are the only ones that will. The locals are not really interested unfortunately because they'd rather be on benefits but our European workers are a great bunch, really hard working and diligent and if we didn't have them we'd be in real trouble so it gets on my nerves when people complain about migrant workers because this country could not do without them (June, operations director, food processing company, rural Scotland).⁴⁸

Similar views can be heard from other employments sectors. This voice comments on the role of Polish migrant workers in the care sector:

The Poles are so hard-working they put the British workers to shame. It's so sad that they are qualified nurses who have to hide their training and skills to work as carers. The care sector could not manage without them. (Employer, Aberdeenshire)⁴⁹

There are negative voices too, but they usually focus on other matters, such as the tendency of Poles to 'stick together'. This impression is reinforced by an entrepreneurial infrastructure that tends to grow in Polish neighbourhoods, with Polish shops, churches, newspapers and 'hearing a lot of Polish in the street'. Polish reactions to rejection of 'their Polish ways', on the other hand, are also vociferous. A Polish woman during the first roundtable (Aberdeen 17 November 2014) was clearly concerned that Polish families are assigned social housing in Aberdeen where, she says, 'the local neighbours do not care how their houses look like, we put flowers on the balcony and look after our flats, but the Scots do nothing of the sort, everything just looks drab and neglected'. As a result, she thinks, Poles are not popular on these estates. Consequently social isolation, as observed by Paulina Trevena's research⁵⁰, becomes an issue. There is concern among local people about overcrowding of local health centres and schools, particularly Catholic schools with a good reputation that were desirable to non-Catholic parents, who now face rejection due to the large number of Catholic A8 migrants.⁵¹ As the same time it is reported that Polish school children boost educational aspiration among British pupils.⁵²

Religion is also at the root of a conflict over different versions of Catholicism. Marta Trzebiatowska's research on the arrival of a large number of Polish priests in Scotland, attracted to cater for the Polish migrant community, uncovered some interesting developments. With increasing migrant numbers, the demand for Polish-language mass could only be met by importing priests from Poland. Despite early enthusiasm for this import among British Catholics, who felt that their churches were seeing a revival of activities, church leaders in Britain soon perceived threats to their universalist understanding of Catholicism. As newly-arrived Polish priests were accused of narrowly focusing on the needs of Polish Catholics, Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor urged Polish Catholics to integrate in order to avoid a split of the UK's Catholic church.⁵³ Trzebiatowska's analysis of attitudes among Polish churchgoers in Aberdeen came to the conclusion that 'Poles see their Catholicism as a symbolic

⁴⁸ McCollum, Findlay (2011), *passim*.

⁴⁹ de Lima, Wright (2009), p. 395.

⁵⁰ Trevena (2015), *passim*.

⁵¹ Report by Bristol City council (n.d.), https://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/polish%20workers%20in%20Bristol%202006.gov_.pdf [18-06-2015]

⁵² The Telegraph, 22 May 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/9280815/Polish-children-boosting-standards-among-English-pupils-study-suggests.html> [18-06-2015]

⁵³ Trzebiatowska (2010), p. 1057.

extension of their national identity'. Instead of considering the import of Polish priests as a transitional stage, with the hope that Polish Catholics would eventually accept mass in English, Polish mass has firmly established itself, together with other exclusionary practices specific to Polish Catholicism, such as the transfer of powers previously in the hand of the lay parish boards to the Polish priest (such as managing of income and buildings), and the gearing of pastoral care exclusively towards the Polish community.⁵⁴

As a result critical voices could be heard, such as the comment by a young Scottish Catholic who protested that it was difficult 'to get into the cathedral on the day of the Polish school, or when suddenly all the Poles decide to confess! I have nothing against them sharing our church, but there are so many that it's more like a take-over!'⁵⁵ This clearly undermines the intention of integration which religious ritual and identity could further. Instead of combining Polishness and Scottishness through a shared church and religious rituals, the opposite effect of integration sets in: fragmentation and alienation. On the other hand, denying the Poles Polish-speaking priests would deny newly-arrived migrants, who suffer from isolation, language barriers and lack of community support, the opportunity to find support from religious rituals in their language⁵⁶, which shows how fine the line can be between encouragement to integrate and pressures of assimilation.

Transferability of the Polish model

Such research has not only implications for integration policies but it also shows that transferability of the Polish example to other migrant communities from A8 countries, partly due to sheer numbers, cannot be straight forward. Poles are particularly concerned about the image East European migrants have in the press, as Polish media regularly present negative UK media coverage of A8 migrants. In reaction to such coverage in UK media, the Scottish parliament's Equal Opportunities' Committee and the Cross Party Group on Poland, since 2010, have announced their intention to carry out a 'myth-busting' exercise to dispel misinformation created by mass media, in order to make it easier for Scotland to attract immigrants to solve its job recruitment crisis.⁵⁷

Anne White has emphasised that despite the great differences between A8 migrant communities, often due to legal and historical reasons, there are points of comparison and 'reasons to generalise'.⁵⁸ The migration and integration experiences of EEA and A8 migrants are more similar to each other than those of non-EEA migrants, refugees or asylum-seekers from the rest of the world.⁵⁹ In particular, A8 migrants among the younger generation share similar experiences. The market place often supports such trends in very practical terms: 'there is a degree of solidarity and collaboration between different groups of East Europeans, as shown, for example, in shops which sell Polish, Lithuanian and Russian products.'⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 1059-1063.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 1064.

⁵⁶ Shubin (2012), pp. 623-25.

⁵⁷ The Scottish Parliament website (2015):

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/gd/newsandmediacentre/25236.aspx> [22-06-2015]

⁵⁸ White (2011), p. 3.

⁵⁹ Burrell (2006), *passim*.

⁶⁰ White (2011), p. 3.

The Poles and the Lithuanians have the advantage of a tradition of settlement in Scotland. This has fostered a communal memory of the diaspora and prepared the ground for networks that continue across generations. The awareness of a 'self-help' community, especially strong among Lithuanians, is a model which has - consciously or not - been taken up by other nationalities. Martin Fell of the teahouse Tchai-Ovna, an artists' den in Glasgow's west end where poets, musicians and other creative folk regularly meet, is an ideal place for migrant artists to build networks, start out and make an impression. The attraction of the tea house for Glasgow's Govanhill Slovak and Czech community, not least due to the owner's Czech family background, has helped to make it a focus for migrant groups also from other national backgrounds. This is reflected in the community support Tchai-Ovna received when it was taken to court by a developer who contested the expansion of the teahouse veranda over his ground.⁶¹ Martin also observed that in such shared meeting places migrants often learn each other's languages rather than English.

In contrast to this rare institution of a Czech teahouse, numerous Polish restaurants, cafés and shops can be found in most cities in Scotland⁶², including the traditional servicemen clubs in Edinburgh and Glasgow.⁶³ The downside of the dense Polish infrastructure, however, is the lack of incentives to learn English, while less rooted communities who arrive as individuals rather than through networks and into migrant neighbourhoods, prioritise the acquisition of English. Paulina Trevena's research has shown that among A8 nationals, Poles have the best knowledge of the political, social and welfare system in Scotland.⁶⁴

Perceptions of A8 migrant communities of each other represents an important and still under-researched area. If Poles do not attend events in localities offered by the Ukrainian migrant community, similar tensions exist also between Poles and Lithuanians, which cannot be understood without knowledge of historical stereotypes. Some of these are transferred, but in many cases, the neutral environment of the UK/Scotland changes the dynamics: 'I (...) noticed that they [the Lithuanians] don't like Polish people. I have never encountered that when I lived in Lithuania, but here I see that somehow they are not liked.' (D., Lithuanian, 20 yrs, Glasgow).⁶⁵ As reported by this interviewee, non-Polish migrants from East Central Europe are frequently asked whether they are Poles, as the image of the Pole is almost automatically transferred to them. Not only does this foster resentment among non-Polish migrants from the A8 countries, but it also suggests that the image of the 'Pole', with all its positive and negative connotations, has achieved the status of a 'prototype' for the A8 migrant.

Varying educational, social and age profiles of migrants and the resulting competition for some corners of the job market, however, are often greater reasons for division than national origin. It is therefore often more beneficial to compare the experiences within professional and skills groups. Overqualification can be as frustrating as a lack of skills, an experience shared by many A8 migrants, particularly among the more recent immigrants.

⁶¹ Glasgow TV, 2 March 2015, <http://glasgow.stv.tv/articles/311841-tchai-ovna-lose-court-battle-but-vow-to-continue-serving-tea-to-glasgow/> [18-06-2015]

⁶² The example showcasing a Scottish restaurant in Glasgow, on BBC Scotland's L.A.B. programme <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0171mcn> [18-06-2015].

⁶³ <http://www.scotpoles.co.uk/> and <http://www.sikorskipolishclub.org.uk/C5/index.php/home/> [18-06-2015]

⁶⁴ Trevena (2015a).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Summary:

Some of the most frequently shared obstacles to integration (without claiming completeness) are therefore

- Insufficient language skills
- Isolation, particularly of family members who are not in work but looks after the family⁶⁶
- Migrant networks that inhibit closer contact to local communities in Scotland
- Over-/ underqualification which restrict access to the job market and 'established' society
- Clash of expectations and cultural misunderstandings
- Different social, political, religious norms
- Difficulties to express emotions in a foreign language

Aspects of transnationalism that further integration and intercultural contact:

- Families more likely to grow local roots
- Often children make contacts for their parents and communicate for them
- Government and local authorities' services (cooperating with migrant networks)
- Charities and NGOs working with migrants (e.g. mental health, anti-suicide initiatives)
- Knowledge transfer initiatives, academic involvement
- Local and social media
- Networks that bridge national and cultural divides (PAA involvement with local community, radio, Polish-Scottish choir, churches, childcare, Scottish-Polish heritage trail, etc)

This only indicates that much more research needs to be done on a comparative level, so that differences in local and regional policy-making within Scotland can be better analysed and informed conclusions drawn by policy-makers. There is a particular need in future to focus on non-Polish A8 immigration and integration and compare the results to the much larger body of studies we already have on Polish migrants. Several projects on the Slovakian and Romanian Roma and Lithuania exist but they need to be extended and approached in a more systematic way so that they can yield useful information about the heterogeneity of the integration experience in Scotland, which links up migrants and the local Scottish communities for the benefit of Scotland and the people who live there.⁶⁷ As a result individuals, families and ethnic groups who feel well received and fairly treated will be happier to contribute to their new context and to the well-being of Scottish society as a whole.

⁶⁶ White (2011a), pp. 11-32.

⁶⁷ Examples include Sime et al (2010), with Emilia Piętko-Nykaza, funded by the ESRC, <http://www.migrantchildren.net/> [22-06-2015], focusing on Polish and Slovakian Roma children, and Grill (2012), pp.42-54, and Parutis (2009).

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