

Integration of migrants in Poland: Contradictions and imaginations

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1. Introduction

Poland is a country with one of the lowest percentages of people of non-native descent. After World War II, as a result of significant changes in Polish borders and resettlements of German, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Lithuanian and Polish population, Poland became a relatively homogeneous country, both culturally and ethnically. The exact number of foreigners living in Poland, however, is not known. Many foreigners aren't living in Poland permanently, and only come here temporarily to work.

In Polish history, there were several large migratory waves – some of them were forced because of political reasons, others were caused by economic factors. The last massive emigration was the outflow of Poles to Great Britain after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004. The change in economic and political situation and the general increase in prosperity in Poland in the last decade made Poland an attractive country for immigrants, especially those outside of European Union. That is why nowadays there has been a significant increase in the number of foreigners arriving to Poland. For example, in 2017 over 200,000 foreigners applied for residence permits in Poland, 22% more than in the previous year.

However, despite the growing influx of nationals from other countries to Poland, most of which in recent years have been citizens of Ukraine and Belarus, India and Vietnam, Poland remains the country with the lowest percentage of foreigners in the EU. In the National Census for 2011, only 1.55% of people declared national-ethnic affiliation other than Polish.

So-called migration crisis, which came over Europe in 2015, however, has also influenced Poland. Right-wing groups which thrive on fear of foreigners, especially those coming from Muslim countries, have a lion's share in shaping anti-immigrant and xenophobic attitudes (Jaskułowski, 2019). This sudden interest in immigration issues, however, relates only to a change in social attitudes, and not development of specific solutions in this area.

In this chapter we often use the term 'foreigners' not 'migrants' because Polish regulations and strategic documents relate to foreigners not migrants or immigrants. The latter two terms are present only in the discourse (both expert and general) on the issue of immigration. So for the sake of being in line with how the issue is perceived by Polish institutions we also use the term 'foreigners'. Of course, this usage has certain consequences, because the exact meaning of the 'foreigner' (in Polish 'cudzoziemiec') is a person from another (or even alien) land. In that sense the legal acts highlight the difference, not a potential similarity between the people.

This chapter is a review of the most important areas of integration of various categories of immigrants in Poland. We claim that there is a lot of contradictions in the interactions between immigrants and various sectors of Polish society. In some spheres of social life there are barriers to integration,

while in others there is relative openness. Yet, there is also a plethora of myths and imaginary constructs about the contacts between newcomers and hosts. Many of the myths are mimicked from the amplified and dramatised debates recurring in Western European societies in the last decades. The strongest myth informing the Polish debates about integration of immigrants in Poland is the one of cultural closeness. Policy-makers, the public at large, and many migration scholars seem to be sure that cultural closeness is a recipe for successful integration. Hence the immigration from Ukraine, perceived as culturally close, is welcomed while immigration from Asia or Africa is raising concerns.

The chapter has the following structure: We start with an overview of the integration and migration policy of the Polish state. Then we focus on the legal regulations regarding the labour market, pre-integration of forced migrants, social security, and language learning. Next, after discussing the state's policies we pay some attention to emerging local integration policies. After the review of the areas steered by policies we take the more bottom-up approach and look at the social and cultural integration. Then we move to the issue of the access to the educational system. Finally, we summarise the chapter drawing some conclusions about the contradictions in the integration of immigrants in Poland.

2. Polish integration and migration policy

Integration of newcomers is still not a particularly relevant area of political interest in the development of specific legal and political instruments regarding the inclusion of migrants into society. For this reason, there are still relatively few provisions in Polish legislation regarding the functioning and integration of foreigners. In this section we are focusing on the following policies: integration, migration and labour.

The lack of Polish tradition as a host country, systemic transformation, and generally low living standards of Poles just several years ago, affect today's problems with establishing a specific and long-term migration and integration policy in Poland. There is no definition of "integration" in Polish legislation. In the Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 9 March 2009¹⁰⁶ on granting assistance to foreigners, the integration process is mentioned, but this only concerns the implementation of the so-called individual integration programmes, referring only to people who have been granted refugee status or subsidiary protection, which will be discussed later in the text.

According to the mentioned document, integration is a process consisting of three elements: basic knowledge of the language, having a job enabling economic self-empowerment, and making contact with representatives of the local community that is conducive to participation in social, cultural and public life. Therefore this is a very narrow understanding of this term. In international documents, integration has a far broader connotation. In 2016 European Commission has adopted an Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals¹⁰⁷ which includes actions across following policy areas: pre-arrival measures to prepare both migrants and local communities for the integration process, education and language learning, employment and vocational training, access to basic services (such as housing and healthcare), social inclusion (cultural life and fighting discrimination).

106 Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 9 marca 2009 r. w sprawie udzielania pomocy cudzoziemcom, którzy uzyskali w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej status uchodźcy lub ochronę uzupełniającą, Dz.U. 2009 nr 45 poz. 366.

107 Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, COM(2016) 377 final of 7.6.2016.

Analysis of integration of foreigners in Poland should emphasise that legal provisions creating elements of integration policy refer almost exclusively to the beneficiaries of international protection. From various spheres of public policies that may affect the functioning of migrants, basically only in the field of education, integration applies to all children with migration experience, not just to refugees. Yet, some authors speak of mainstreaming by accident and point to other areas, where immigrants are included as a policy target group (Józwiak – Sánchez-Domínguez – Sorando, 2018).

In 2012, for the first time in the history of Poland, the government adopted a migration strategy. Document titled "Poland's Migration Policy – Current Status and Postulated Actions" contained directions for action as well as solutions and guidelines for public administration in the field of migration, including legislation, administrative practice, monitoring, financial planning and coordination of the activities of offices, institutions and ministries. This document also contained some elements of integration policy. "Poland's Migration Policy" was a document strongly influenced by the instruments promoted by the European Commission (Pawlak, 2013). As a result of the change on the Polish political scene, after which the anti-immigrant party 'Law and Justice' came to power, this strategy was officially cancelled. A few months later, the new government announced that it is working on a new migration strategy. However, the latest (backstage) reports say that the government may return to the cancelled strategy, with some modifications. However, the authorities do not want to make an official announcement to this effect.

The previous government undertook work on the integration strategy, but did not manage to finish this document. After the takeover of power by "Law and Justice", the work on this matter was terminated. That is why now in Poland there are no documents that regulate migration and integration policy as a whole and in the long-term. Worth mentioning is also the most recent document, which is not dedicated to migration or integration issues per se, but pays quite a lot of attention to foreigners – "National Action Plan for Employment for 2018".

This plan, developed at the national level, is by definition the starting point for creating new instruments and mechanisms for managing the labour market. The document recognises such challenges related to the current situation in the labour market as negative demographic trends related to the lack of employees. One of the proposals to solve the deficit of employees, apart from the economic activation of the unemployed and people over 50, is opening up of the labour market to foreign workers to a greater extent. The Action Plan refers to "a balanced influx of [foreign] workers", as well as the need for a properly implemented migration policy, based on the policy of labour migration.

At present, Polish labour market is characterised by a relatively large share of foreign short-term (e.g. seasonal) workers in relation to people working in Poland on a permanent basis. Therefore, one of the priorities of the future migration policy should be, according to the authors of the Action Plan, the development of mechanisms encouraging migrants "who have a stable professional situation in Poland to settle here permanently and supporting them in obtaining a status enabling indefinite stay in Poland (including obtaining the citizenship of the Republic of Poland".

Action Plan indicates also an additional objective – effective policy of labour migration and migration management, which will be achieved, among many other steps, by improving IT tools, registers, online applications, introducing new legal provisions and monitoring of laws introduced in this area, and information activities in the employment of foreigners.

The discussed document recognises the demand for foreigners to fill gaps in the labour market. All of the above, however, takes place behind the scenes of the media, far from the public. In this context, the statement of the Deputy Minister of Investment and Development, Paweł Choraży, is worth mentioning. In August 2018 he announced that maintaining economic development at the current level

requires a constant inflow of immigrants. He also added that countries that have achieved the greatest economic success and prosperity built it on migrants. This statement, which took place shortly before the local elections, was clearly contradictory to what the Polish government officially proclaimed. Soon after this speech, Mr. Choraży was dismissed from his post by the Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. He revealed something, which is a rather obvious and “open secret” – and experts and politicians, also politicians of Law and Justice, are aware of – the difficult situation on the labour market and the need to recruit employees from outside Poland. However, the government that proclaims anti-immigrant slogans cannot officially announce such a policy. What is more, largely hidden from the public eye is the fact that work permits are issued to an increasing number of foreigners, especially citizens of Eastern European countries, and more and more often also foreigners from Asia.

Apart from the lack of strategic documents, the second shortcoming of the Polish migration and integration policy is the insufficient knowledge about foreigners in Poland. There are few statistical data on the total number of foreigners in Poland or the number of persons with a refugee status. The available data is incomplete, and because of that, there is no possibility to draw conclusions about the phenomenon of migration in Poland and to take adequate actions. For example, even though we have data on the number of persons granted refugee status, subsidiary protection or other forms of support, the problem is that a significant percentage of these people do not stay in Poland, but go further to Western Europe. Thus, the overwhelming majority of people who have applied for refugee status are still leaving before they even gain this status. Without knowing the exact data, there is no possibility to create an appropriate migration and integration policy, which (based on knowledge and facts – the so-called *evidence based policy*) would adequately address the needs of both migrants and the host society.

3. Legal regulations regarding the integration of foreigners in Poland

In Poland, the scope of the integration often depends on the status of the foreigner. Integration policy applies almost exclusively to people who have received or are seeking international protection. Apart from certain exceptions (such as in education and – to a certain extent – the labour market), there are nearly no instruments to include economic migrants into Polish society.

Integration of migrants takes place in many areas of social life. In Poland there is no official strategic document outlining migration and integration policy, but there are various other legal regulations pertaining to aspects of migrants' integration. Integration policy, understood as public policy, is therefore a set of various legal provisions regulating this area. Integration policy includes elements of social, educational or health policy. These provisions shape real policy and have a real impact on the quality of life and the functioning of foreigners in Polish society. This section will discuss the main provisions that affect the integration of migrants.

3.1. Integration of foreigners in the labour market

Regulations relating to various areas of migrant integration are included in the Polish legal order in various acts, depending on the topic they concern. For example, provisions for children with migration experience are included in the Act on Education Law, access to medical service – In the Act on Health

Care Services Financed from Public Funds, regarding social security – in the Act on Social Assistance etc. From the point of view of functioning of foreigners in Poland, the most crucial is the Act of 12 December 2013 on Foreigners¹⁰⁸ and the Act of 20 April 2014 on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions¹⁰⁹. The regulations contained in the first of them concern, inter alia, the rules and conditions of entry of foreigners onto the territory of the Republic of Poland, as well as regulations of stay and departure. The second one regulates the rules of employing immigrants.

A foreigner who wants to take up employment in Poland must have a relevant permit (unless exempt from this obligation). On the basis of a work permit, a foreigner must have a residence permit (e.g. an appropriate visa or a temporary residence permit) with which he/she is entitled to work. In addition, there is a fairly wide range of foreigners who can work without permission in Poland. They are listed exhaustively, among others: persons with refugee status or subsidiary protection, persons with a permanent residence permit, persons possessing the status of a long-term EU resident, foreigners with a residence permit due to humanitarian reasons or tolerated stay, persons using temporary protection, citizens of EU and EEA Member States, holders of Pole's Card (Karta Polaka) and others.

As large labour deficits exist on the Polish labour market, and at the same time complicated requirements and rigidities make it difficult to employ foreigners in Poland, the former government has simplified and made the procedures for some categories of foreign workers more flexible. Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 21 April 2015 on cases in which it is permissible to entrust work to someone in the territory of the Republic of Poland without the need to obtain a work permit¹¹⁰, exempted certain persons from third countries from having to obtain a work permit. The document mentions third-country nationals who conduct training in Poland, hold professional internships, who are foreign language teachers, members of the armed forces, foreign correspondents, performers, athletes, clergymen, full-time students, research workers and, under specific conditions, posted workers and other employees. Earlier Regulation – of 20 July 2011 – introduced another important mechanism, namely the possibility of working without permission for the citizens of Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine for a period not exceeding 6 months during the next 12 months¹¹¹. In this case, the prospective employer is only required to submit a declaration of intention to entrust work to a foreigner.

Further changes facilitating the employment of foreigners were introduced by the current government on the 1st of January 2018. The amended Act on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions introduced a new solution enabling employment of foreigners in Poland for seasonal work. Seasonal work is work performed for a period not longer than 9 months in a calendar year in the following sectors: agriculture, gardening, and tourism. Six months later, the government introduced further rules liberalising the employment of foreigners. This is the Regulation of the Family, Labour and Social Policy Directorate of 28th of June 2018 amending the ordinance on the determina-

108 Ustawa z dnia 12 grudnia 2013 r. o cudzoziemcach, Dz.U. 2013 poz. 1650.

109 Ustawa z dnia 20 kwietnia 2004 r. o promocji zatrudnienia i instytucjach rynku pracy, Dz.U. 2004 nr 99 poz. 1001 (z późn. zm.).

110 Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 21 kwietnia 2015 r. w sprawie przypadków, w których powierzenie wykonywania pracy cudzoziemcowi na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej jest dopuszczalne bez konieczności uzyskania zezwolenia na pracę, Dz.U. 2015 poz. 588.

111 Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 20.07.2011 r. w sprawie przypadków, w których powierzenie wykonywania pracy cudzoziemcowi na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej jest dopuszczalne bez konieczności uzyskania zezwolenia na pracę, Dz. U. z 2015 r. poz. 95.

tion of cases in which the work permit of a foreigner is issued irrespective of the specific conditions for issuing work permits for foreigners¹¹².

When applying for a work permit, Polish regulations require a so-called "labour market test". This means that a foreigner may obtain a work permit from a given employer only if there is no possibility of employing a Polish or EU citizen for that position. However, not every job requires a labour market test. This regulation extends the catalogue of professions for which it is not necessary to carry it out. Currently, it covers several dozen occupations, including, among others, construction jobs, the IT industry, drivers of trucks and buses, doctors and nurses, care workers for the elderly. This instrument significantly simplifies and shortens the employment procedure for foreigners.

The new law announced by the government to replace the Labour Market and Employment Promotion Act in 2019 is supposed to introduce further improvements in the employment of foreigners, including extending the period of work performed without a work permit on the basis of a statement on entrusting work to a foreigner for up to 12 months during the next 18 months and recognition of work as legal during the waiting period for a new work permit in the event of a change of position with the same employer.

Therefore, despite the officially proclaimed anti-immigration policy, the Polish authorities have introduced a number of liberalising measures in the field of employment of foreigners. Regulations regarding the employment of foreigners are still overcomplicated and too complex, foreigners complain about queues in offices, difficult legalisation procedures, long periods of waiting for decisions. At the same time, however, there is a clear tendency to gradually simplify and liberalise the rules.

3.2. Pre-integration of forced migrants

The integration process begins before the foreigner has been granted refugee status at the moment he/she is crossing the border. There are some basic instruments in the Polish law aimed at facilitating the pre-integration process of forced migrants. These and other issues concerning the rules of admission of forced migrants, granting them status and the scope of social assistance granted to them are included in the Act of 13 June 2003 on Granting Protection to Foreigners in the Territory of the Republic of Poland¹¹³. Upon arrival to Poland and submitting an application for international protection, the foreigner goes to the reception centre (there are two such centres in Poland), where he/she undergoes medical examinations. Then the person has two options. Until the status is obtained, he/she can stay in an open centre for foreigners, where he/she is provided with accommodation, food, 20 zlotys per month for the purchase of personal hygiene products (around 4.7 euros), pocket money in the amount of 50 zlotys per month (about 12 euros), and one-off amount for purchase of clothing and footwear or vouchers for their purchase.

A person who has applied for international protection may also choose to stay outside the centre. He or she can then receive a cash benefit of 25 PLN for one day (about 6 euros). The amount of the benefit is accordingly reduced for subsequent family members. In a situation where a foreigner does not have, for example, financial support from friends or family staying in Poland, this amount of money is barely above the minimum subsistence level.

112 Rozporządzenie Ministra Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 28 czerwca 2018 r. zmieniające rozporządzenie w sprawie określenia przypadków, w których zezwolenie na pracę cudzoziemca jest wydawane bez względu na szczegółowe warunki wydawania zezwoleń na pracę cudzoziemców, Dz.U. 2018 poz. 1264.

113 Ustawa z dnia 13 czerwca 2003 r. o udzielaniu cudzoziemcom ochrony na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Dz.U. 2003 nr 128 poz. 1176 (z późn. zm.).

Regardless of whether the foreigner chooses to stay in or outside of the centre, for the duration of the proceedings he/she has the possibility of free Polish language courses and access to medical care (including psychological). Pupils have access to schools and teaching resources (textbooks).

According to the regulations, the procedure for granting international protection should last up to six months. However, in practice this time is much longer and usually lasts for several months. During the first six months of the procedure, the foreigners are not permitted to work. If the procedure is prolonged – it lasts more than half a year and if it is not the fault of the foreigner – she or he gets the permission to work.

3.3. Social security – individual integration programmes for beneficiaries of international protection

For foreigners who have been granted refugee status or subsidiary protection and for their family members Individual Integration Programmes (IPIs) are available. IPI rules are indicated in the Act on Social Assistance and Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 7 April 2015 on Providing Assistance to Foreigners. IPIs are granted for a period of up to 12 months from the date of granting the refugee status or subsidiary protection, upon the recognition by social worker of the respective family situation. The aid includes money for subsistence (food costs, purchase of clothes, housing maintenance, medicine, purchase of hygiene products), covering expenses for learning Polish, health insurance with free access to health care and counselling (legal, psychological, vocational, pedagogical). The amount of IPI funds depends on the time and number of family members. During the first 6 months of the programme, it equals 1,335 PLN (approximately 317 euros) per month for a single person and is reduced for subsequent family members. Considering the cost of living in Poland, this amount is very low and may not be sufficient to cover the costs of living. Moreover, the period for granting this benefit may be too short for the migrant to be able to adapt to the new conditions. The individual integration programmes are criticised for not setting specific benchmarks, that is they last for one year no matter the improvement of the social inclusion of the migrant (Frelak – Klaus – Wiśniewski, 2007). There are even authors who claim the policy of integration of beneficiaries of international protection leads rather to their social exclusion than to the integration with society (Lukasiewicz, 2017).

3.4. Learning Polish

Free Polish language lessons are provided for all persons who have applied for international protection. After receiving refugee status or subsidiary protection, foreigners receive IPI funds to cover expenses – among others – related to learning the Polish language. Furthermore, free Polish language lessons in schools are provided for children with migration experience. In addition, there are many grassroots and ad-hoc initiatives, mainly provided by NGOs and local governments that organise Polish language courses for foreigners. Worth a mention is an interesting initiative implemented by the authorities in Wrocław called “Wrocław on World Languages”. As part of the programme, free, volunteer-based meetings are organised in pairs: Wrocławian-foreigner, during which Poles are teaching immigrants the Polish language. The programmes and activities aimed at Polish language learning are financed also from Warsaw’s local government. A few years ago, Warsaw authorities launched Multi-cultural Centre, which aims to promote diversity and counteract migrants’ marginalisation.

One of its elements is the organisation of free Polish language courses for migrants. Other mechanisms will be described further on in the text.

3.5. Legal regulations regarding integration policy – general comments

Most of the Polish legal instruments relating to migrants have emerged only recently. There is no coherent integration policy, so these rules often appear in ad-hoc and unsystematic manner. Often they are not interrelated and are only a reaction to the existing circumstances, not an element of a planned strategy. There are two basic situations in which legal provisions for foreigners are introduced. First, when there is a problem that arises in connection with the appearance of foreigners in a specific area of social life. Such problems give rise to specific needs of dealing with previously unknown situations (as, for example, there were changes in individual integration programmes that in their original form did not provide assistance for family members of persons with international protection). The second reason for changes in the integration law is Poland's membership in various international organisations and associations, of which of the greatest importance is the European Union, which imposes certain obligations.

Because the Polish state is not efficient enough and does not provide a sufficient level of social security or counselling for migrants, the situation of newcomers in Poland is to a considerable degree dependent on the activities of NGOs. Such organisations provide assistance in the field of legal counselling, career counselling, psychological counselling or social orientation. By 2015, these types of activities were financed from the EU funds – mainly AMIF. Currently, the Polish authorities have decided to suspend availability of these funds to NGOs. This resulted in a significant reduction of the offer, and some of the organisations were forced to suspend their activities.

It is worth citing the results of the Institute of Public Affairs research regarding the integration of migrants from EU member states (Renaud, 2018). These people are usually very well educated, and also well integrated into the labour market. They usually have access to private health services, have no difficulty in renting an apartment, and their children attend private schools. Therefore, they do not have basic problems encountered by migrants from third countries such as access to health care, housing or social security. For these migrants, the main obstacle hindering their full integration is the lack of opportunities to learn soft and social skills. The respondents in the interviews emphasised entry barriers to access local society, which makes it impossible to get to know the neighbourhood and local communities in which they function on a daily basis.

Results of the mentioned research are also important for the integration of citizens from non-EU countries. It is obvious that at the time of arriving in a new country the most important and basic problem is finding a job, issues of legalisation and social security, bringing the family. But integration should be understood in a holistic way, as a proper adaptation and a sense of "being at home". Thus, when making an assessment of Polish migration policy, it is necessary to take into account the lack of any instruments in Poland that on the one hand engage foreigners, and on the other hand, the host society in the integration process. Integration is about creating in foreigners a sense of connection with the host country, when the host country is much more than just a way of gaining financial benefits or escaping a direct threat in the country of origin. This element in Polish integration policy is definitely lacking.

4. Emerging local level integration policies

Poland is a centralised state and its approach to the integration is not different in this regard. The integration of beneficiaries of international protection is organised through cooperation of the state institutions and the institutions governed by the local authorities. The Individual Integration Programmes are conducted by the Family Assistance Centres – a welfare agency at the county level. Yet, local case-workers do not have much independence in running the programmes as they are defined by the ministry ordinance and the spending is audited by the regional representation of government.

Yet, in Poland we can observe also a process often called a local turn in integration (Matusz Protasiewicz, 2013). Local authorities of the largest Polish cities in the recent period became more involved in implementing their own integration policies. Warsaw, the largest Polish city where the largest number of immigrants resides, opened the Multicultural Centre (Winiarska – Wojno, 2018; Duszczuk – Pszczółkowska – Wach, 2018). The Multicultural Centre is an example of multi-level governance in action: it is supported by the city hall but managed by the consortium of non-governmental organisations, which are encouraged to apply for EU funds for the activities. Moreover, in the centre there is a possibility of applying for the residence permits to the regional representation of the state authorities.

In Warsaw within the structure of the city hall there is a small unit coordinating the actions of other departments in regards to the presence of immigrants in the city. There is also a consultation body bringing together non-governmental organisations active in the field of integration called Social Dialogue Committee of the City of Warsaw for Foreigner Issues. The Committee operates since 2012 and is mostly a platform for information exchange (Winiarska – Wojno, 2018).

Some similar actions are taken by other Polish cities. Gdańsk, Kraków and Wrocław developed their local integration strategies, while Warsaw does not have any official document stating objectives of its integration policy. The actions taken by the cities are most visible in the domain of intercultural dialogue and education. The cities are responsible for the local schools and it is their decision together with headmasters to open “preparatory classes” for immigrant pupils (see section ‘Access for foreign children to the Polish educational system’). Limited resources of the city authorities as well as their limited legal competences do not allow them to implement large-scale integration policies. For example, the Warsaw programme of the council flats available to the beneficiaries of international protection is limited to five apartments per year. Yet, the growing focus of local authorities on the issue of integration is visible. The Union of Polish Cities – organisation bringing together the 12 largest Polish cities – declared in 2017 that it will cooperate in the field of immigration and launched a team in order to exchange good practices.

5. Social integration

In this section we focus on the position and outcomes for immigrants for their participation in the labour market, housing, and healthcare (Penninx – Garcés – Mascareñas, 2016). Legal framework for access to labour market is discussed above, therefore we pay more attention to the educational system below. Additionally, in this section we discuss how the social integration is understood in the Polish legal acts.

As we discussed the legal provisions for the immigrants' participation in the labour market in the previous section 'Integration of foreigners in the labour market', here we pay attention to the actual integration in practice. Research on the position of various categories of immigrants on the Polish labour market is already quite extensive (see Bojar et. al., 2005; Fihel – Górny – Kaczmarczyk, 2008). Immigrants are present as highly qualified workers (Dolińska, 2017; Konieczna-Sałamatin, 2015) but majority of them are present on the secondary labour market using the scheme of short-term employment (so-called 'oświadczenia' or statements) (Szulecka, 2016). There is no research evidence on the labour market advancement for the foreign labour force in Poland, so we do not know if immigrants after starting their employment in secondary labour market gradually improve their position and move to better jobs. In case of jobs in construction, agriculture, and domestic jobs it probably happens rarely. Visas for short-term employment for some workers are used – according to the declared intention of policy-makers – as a legal basis for cyclical migration. In this case it is hard to talk about labour market integration, although some of the cyclical migrants operate on both labour markets (country of origin and receiving economy). Some other immigrants use visas for short-term employment as a tool for the legalisation of their residence.

The legal construction governing the residence permits based on work permits, which are granted to the employers, and not to employees, put immigrant workers in unfavourable position of dependence on their employers. Immigrants in Poland have only recently started to be a target group for trade unions (Kubisa, 2017). The measures applied by the state aim only at the integration of those beneficiaries of international protection who are eligible for various forms of support by job centres. Majority of the categories of immigrants from outside of the EU are not eligible to any services or support from the job centres. This means that they barely have any representation in the industrial relations. We observe also a growing number of immigrant entrepreneurs in Poland, yet many of them face the same problems as native small-size entrepreneurs squeezed somewhere between business activities and unconventional forms of employment on the secondary labour market (Andrejuk, 2017).

In the area of housing, the integration of immigrants in Poland is ambiguous. On the one hand, immigrants have extremely limited access to public housing, evidenced by just a few cities having a small number of special council flats allocated to the beneficiaries of international protection. Other categories of immigrants are simply not eligible for public housing (it has to be noted that for Polish citizens access to public housing is also very limited). On the other hand, we do not observe spatial segregation in Poland. Most groups of immigrants are dispersed in the cities and only in case of the Vietnamese community there is some concentration in the specific zones of Warsaw metropolitan area (Grzymała-Kazłowska – Piekut, 2007). Short-term immigrants apply typical strategies of low-rent housing and they often occupy downgraded apartments. In case of beneficiaries of international protection the problem of homelessness is a serious threat (Wysieńska, 2013). In Poland there is also a steady increase in the number of real estate purchased by immigrants: in 2017 foreigners bought 4,822 apartments in Poland while in 2016 they bought 4,648 apartments¹¹⁴.

Healthcare is the domain of immigrants' participation in social life of Poland about which relatively little is known. The issue is also of minimal concern for the policy-makers. Despite the myth of a healthy immigrant the number of foreigners using Polish healthcare is increasing proportionally to the general number of immigrants staying in Poland. Their participation in the healthcare system varies depending on their legal status in Poland and the regulations regarding health insurance of immigrants are quite complicated (Strzemieczna – Imiela, 2017). The situation of the beneficiaries of internation-

114 Reports of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration delivered annual to Polish parliament.

al protection is very well defined in the system and the costs of their healthcare is covered by the state. Other categories of immigrants are obliged to pay for their health insurance. The problem of financing the healthcare is a key one from the point of view of hospitals and clinics. Yet, for immigrants themselves navigating through the complicated system of healthcare in Poland seems to be challenging. The discussion about translation (its cost and responsibility) is in a very early stage. Such services are either provided by non-governmental organisations or very rarely organised in localities with significant immigrant community.

The only regulation mentioning the social integration of immigrants is the Ordinance of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy regarding the assistance to foreigners¹¹⁵. In this legal act regulating the individual programmes of integration targeting the beneficiaries of international protection, the social functioning is mentioned as a process in which advancement of the foreigner is to be monitored by a case worker. Social workers are expected to monitor how an immigrant – a party of the individual integration programme – establishes contacts with local environment and the degree of his or her participation in social, cultural and public life. This definition is rather vague and in reality the case workers do not pay much attention to the social functioning and focus more on the two other domains: language education and participation in the labour market.

6. Cultural integration

Cultural integration of immigrants in Poland seems to be a vague topic. We propose to analyse it on three levels resulting from the understanding of the notion of culture: (1) culture as visible traditions and folklore; (2) culture as a participation in religious practices and consumption of high/popular culture; (3) culture as a competence in social practices and vernacular. The first understanding dominates the thinking about cultural integration in Poland. It covers so-called intercultural dialogue, which is often understood as informing about the specific customs and norms of Polish society and various immigrant groups. Presentation of music, dance and other forms of 'traditional' art of immigrants is regarded as making their culture closer to Poles. Various groups of immigrants are encouraged to present their 'traditional' dances and music. It was a popular practice to support asylum seekers from Caucasus to organise traditional dance presentations at schools. Similar role is played by ethnic cuisine. Promotion of multicultural events and initiatives is often undertaken by city halls, which highlights the cosmopolitan character of their cities.

The second understanding of culture as participation in religious practices and consumption of high/popular culture is the subject of policy-makers' attention only to a very limited scope. The Greek-Orthodox church in Poland plays a role of in-group integration of Ukrainians in Poland. It is a platform for the exchange of information about jobs or housing opportunities. In case of the Muslim community in Poland the arrival of immigrants reshuffled the relations in the traditional small Polish Muslim denomination, which consisted mostly of Tatar ethnic group. Currently, Tatars even feel marginalised in the community of Muslims in Poland. The immigration to Poland of immigrants categorised as Muslims became a subject of heated debate in 2015. Mosques – in the course of increasing islamophobic attitudes – transformed from being unproblematic to objects of contention (Narkowicz – Pędzwiatr, 2017). Regarding the consumption of high or popular culture of immigrants in Poland we

115 Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Pomocy Społecznej z dnia 7 kwietnia 2015 roku w sprawie udzielania pomocy cudzoziemcom (Dz.U. 2015 poz. 515 z późn. zm.).

do not have any data. Although we observe signs of the culture production in their national languages being offered: an example are movie screenings in Ukrainian which are from time to time available in commercial cinemas.

The third understanding of culture as competences in social practices and vernacular is mostly related to the teaching of the language, which we already mentioned above. Some non-governmental organisations provide social orientation courses, in which basic knowledge about getting around in Polish society is explained. Some other practices can be recently observed relating to this understanding of culture, i.e. cities extending the number of languages in which they provide the information to the recipients of their services (i.e. machines vending bus tickets in Łódź and Warsaw in Ukrainian). Similarly, City of Warsaw offers guide to its education system in various languages. Some businesses, especially financial institutions like banks or money transfer services, offer their services in languages of the major immigrant groups.

We observe that the culture in relation to the integration of immigrants is understood in an essentialised manner as a relatively stable whole which organises interactions between individuals and groups (Geertz, 1973). It is often seen through the lens of traditions, traditional art, and participation / consumption of high and mass cultural production. There is not much reflection about practices guided by cultural habits. The knowledge of Polish language is required for the residence permits, yet the state provides language courses only for the beneficiaries of international protection.

7. Access for foreign children to the Polish education system

Polish educational system, both in relation to refugee children and all other children with migration experience, is quite well designed. Access for children with migration experience to basic educational services is basically unlimited, and the offer of the education system includes the possibility of using special instruments that take into account the special needs of children with migration experience. With the inflow of immigrants to Poland, the number of foreign students in Polish schools is constantly growing. According to official data, in the school year 2012/2013, there were 7,311 pupils who were not Polish citizens, while in the school year 2017/2018 there were already 29,942 foreigners. This is more than fourfold increase in just 5 years.

Full access to education of children with migration experience is guaranteed by the law. Firstly, it is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and further specified by the Act of 7 September 1991 on the education system¹¹⁶, the Act of 14 December 2016 – Educational Law¹¹⁷ and executive regulations, according to which children with migration experience have access to education at the primary and secondary level on the same basis as children of citizens of the Republic of Poland. As a result, after the child's arrival at the Centre for Foreigners, he or she is immediately enrolled at school and on the list of pupils.

Another example of good access to education is the lack of administrative barriers to school enrolment. There is also flexibility when it comes to placing children in specific classes – the recent abolition of the obligation of the recognition of school certificates has resulted in doing away with placing children in a class on the basis of a certificate, the number of completed classes or the age of a child.

116 Ustawa z dnia 7 września 1991 r. o systemie oświaty, Dz.U. 1991 nr 95 poz. 425 (z późn. zm.).

117 Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. - Prawo oświatowe, Dz.U. 2017 poz. 59 (z późn. zm.).

Another strong point of Polish educational system is the broad range of instruments, which aim to improve the functioning of the foreign child in Polish school. These include the possibility of participation in additional free Polish language lessons, when the child doesn't communicate in Polish well enough to learn in Polish. Such children may also participate in additional compensatory lessons. The next instrument worth mentioning is the "assistant teacher", which is dedicated to those children who do not speak Polish sufficiently. Assistant teachers are obliged to know the child's native language. This kind of assistance is available for a maximum of 12 months and is conferred at the request of the school headmaster.

The last important tool for children with migration experience in Polish school is the so-called "preparatory classes" – special classes consisting of foreign children, introduced by the regulation of Minister of Education of 9 September 2016. Preparatory classes target pupils who have "adaptation difficulties related to cultural differences or educational environment change or language communication disorders caused in particular by crisis or traumatic situations, including armed conflicts, natural disasters or other humanitarian crises caused by nature or by man"¹¹⁸. The upper limit for the number of children in such class is 15, while the lower limit has not been set. Children can participate in such a class for 12 months with the possibility of extending this period by another 12 months. The stay can be shortened as well.

General assessment of the above measures is positive, however their implementation in practice may be problematic. For example, despite the special nature of the preparatory classes, they have the same, very extensive, core curriculum as "ordinary" classes. In such classes, learning the language should be the priority. This is crucial both from the perspective of further education of children with migration experience and their integration into society.

Another problem is lack of teaching materials specially adapted to the needs of children with migration experience and lack of guidance for teachers. There is no systematic training of teachers to work with foreign children – working in a preparatory class is difficult and requires teachers to possess special skills. Despite the mechanisms that allow, for example, the creation of preparatory classes, in practice this solution is rarely used. Only a few such classes are open in Poland.

Another important issue is, on one hand, the need for hard competences training for teachers and headmasters, such as basic legal provisions important for working with children with migration experience, and on the other hand – soft skills training to better understand the child's situation and problems that both child and the teacher may face.

The last noteworthy problem is unpreparedness of schools in Poland for cultural and ethnic diversity, which often results in racist and xenophobic incidents. Since 2015, there has been an obligation to conduct classes on anti-discrimination topics, as a form of fight against prejudices based on sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, origin and religion. In 2017, however, this obligation was cancelled. Cultural differences can cause various types of tensions and difficulties in running classes and managing a school. According to the results of research, there is a problem of unequal treatment in Polish schools, and cases of discrimination occur rather frequently (Gawlicz – Rudnicki – Starnawski, 2015). That is why it is important to understand specific situation of children with migratory experience, both from the perspective of teachers, students and parents.

118 Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 9 września 2016 r. w sprawie kształcenia osób niebędących obywatelami polskimi oraz osób będących obywatelami polskimi, które pobierały naukę w szkołach funkcjonujących w systemach oświaty innych państw, Dz.U. 2016 poz. 1453.

8. Conclusions

Integration of immigrants in Poland is a social process left to its own devices by the state. According to the official image Poland is not a country of immigration and integration policies target only beneficiaries of international protection. The increasing presence of immigrants in Poland is treated as a presence of a labour force, which does not require additional focus of the state. This resembles the 'gastarbeiter systems' of certain European states in the 1960s. Although we do not have any official strategic document openly declaring the integration policy, there is such policy in Poland. Yet, its reconstruction requires taking into account actions of various agencies and policies formulated across various domains.

On the level of actual social processes and actions taken by individuals, the most significant factor influencing the integration is that so far the majority of immigrants in Poland come from Ukraine: they speak relatively similar Slavic language, do not have physical features perceived as racially different to Poles, and were brought up in a society of similar cultural practices. Ukrainians are perceived as culturally close to Poles, yet this might disguise the barriers they face in the integration to the social life in Poland caused by the legal-institutional system. On the level of national policy, Polish state is interested in acquiring labour force, although it is not publicising it openly in order not to lose the electoral support of anti-immigrant voters. On the level of local policy-making, mayors of the largest cities recently launched integration strategies, yet their impact is quite limited due to the meager funds allocated. So on the level of policy, we see a contradiction: the state declares that it is not open for immigration, while it liberalises access to the labour market – local authorities declare that they are open to immigration, but their actions are mostly related to building positive image. Another paradox is the situation of non-governmental organisations active in the field of integration. When the number of immigrants in Poland was still relatively small it was quite easy for NGOs to obtain financial support from the European funds (Pawlak – Matusz-Protasiewicz, 2015). Yet, since 2015 when together with the increase in immigrants who might need the support from the NGOs, the government of Poland has also limited access of NGOs to the EU funds supporting integration (Westerby, 2018).

The number of immigrants in Poland is increasing and there is also increasing presence of them in various domains of social life. They are present both on primary and secondary labour market. Yet, we cannot say at this point if the trajectories of status attainment are open for the ones starting their careers in Poland on the secondary labour market. Quite probably it is going to be difficult for many of them to run away from the trap of employment in unstable and relatively low paid jobs. So far quite a large portion of migrant labour in Poland has been cyclical but it was made possible because of the geographical proximity of Ukraine. Immigrants from other countries of origin (i.e. increasing immigration from India) will not be able to come back so easily to their country of origin to have some of their social needs met: i.e. health treatment. It is probable that this will put more pressure on the Polish institutions in order to adjust to the ever-growing presence of immigrants.

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